

Amoud University

# Communication skills For Undergraduates

Lecture Notes

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## **Chapter One**

### **Communication Skills**

#### **Introduction**

Communication is a key element in any human activity. Communication is a learned skill. However, while most people are born with the physical ability to talk, not all can communicate well unless they make special efforts to develop and refine this communication skill. Very often, we take the ease with which we communicate with each other for granted, so much so that we sometimes forget how complex the communication process actually is. Communication takes place when we are supposedly at the same level of understanding and comprehension as other interlocutors. Common forms of communication include speaking, writing, gestures, touch, using pictures and broadcasting. Communication is therefore not what is said whether verbally or non-verbally, but what is understood.

#### **What is communication?**

Communication is a word derived from the Latin word **communis** or **commūnicāre**, which means 'to make common' or 'to share'. Communication is the act of conveying intended meaning to another person through the use of mutually understood signs and language. Communication is the art of transmitting information, ideas and attitudes from one person to another.

Communication is the process of meaningful interaction among human beings. The basic steps of communication are: the forming of communicative intent, message composition, message encoding, and transmission of signal, reception of signal, message decoding and finally interpretation of the message by the recipient.

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place to another. When you call or talk verbally to your friend, then you are said to be communicating with your friend.

### **Characteristics of Communication**

The characteristics of communication include:

1. Communication is a process: Communication is a 2 way process which involves; listening to others (Receiving) message Asserting/Expressing (Sending).
2. Communication is a dynamic: it is ever changing depending on the variables at play.
3. . Communication is a complex a process.
4. Communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information but also create and share meaning.
5. Communication involves the sharing of information using a code.
6. Communication occurs between people and sometimes animals
7. Communication is irreversible: once one has communicated something it cannot be recalled back.
8. Communication is a system
9. Communication must have the elements of communication: Source, receiver, channel, message, noise, feedback.
10. Communication can be verbal/ non verbal or visual.
11. Communication can be accidental especially in non-verbal

### **Functions of communication**

Human beings communicate for various reasons. Here are some of the reasons why we must communicate:

1. To change in behavior
2. To influence others
3. To express our thoughts and emotions through words & actions.
4. It is a tool for controlling and motivating people.
5. It is a social and emotional process.
6. Communication for improving self-confidence
7. Entertain
8. Educate
9. Establish relationships
10. Inform
11. Solve problems
12. Make orders
13. Give directions

### **Forms of Communicating**

#### **Verbal Communication**

All forms of communication can be categorized as either verbal or nonverbal. Both verbal and nonverbal communication can be subdivided into either vocal or non-vocal. Verbal communication involves using speech to exchange information with others. We usually communicate verbally in face-to-face conversations such as; meetings, interviews, conferences, speeches, phone calls e.t.c. Much of the communication that takes place between people is both verbal and non-verbal; that is, it is based on language and gestures.

Verbal communication of the vocal category includes spoken language, while non-vocal verbal communication involves written communication as well as communication

that is transmitted through transmitted through sign language, finger spelling, Braille, or other similar alternatives to verbal language.

### **Paraverbal/paralinguistic/ paralanguage features**

Paralinguistic or paralanguage features are the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words. They add emphasis or shades of meaning to what people say. Paralinguistic features accompany verbal communication and are the vocal signals beyond the basic verbal message. Paralinguistic elements in a person's speech, convey meaning beyond the words and grammar used. Examples of paralinguistic features include pitch, rate, quality of voice and amplitude. Other forms of paralanguage can also include laughter or imitative speech. Prosody, which is the rhythm, pattern, stress, rate, volume, inflection and intonation of a person's speech, is also a form of paralanguage.

People express meaning not just in what they say but in the way they say it. The paralinguistic features employed by a speaker provide hint to the meaning, communicate the speakers' attitudes and convey their emotion. Paralinguistic features also alert the listener as to how to interpret the message. Many of these paralinguistic features are culturally coded and inherent in verbal communication, often at a subconscious level.

### **Non-Verbal**

Non-verbal communication is a type of communication that employs gestures and body language. The term "body language" is sometimes used to denote non-verbal communications. "Body Language" is the communication of personal feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body-movements such as gestures, postures, facial expressions, touch, smell, walking styles and positions among

others. These movements can be done either consciously or involuntarily; more often they 'happen' subconsciously, and are accompanied, or not accompanied, by words.

There are basically three elements in any face-to-face communication. These three elements account differently for the meaning of the message:

- Words account for 7%
- Tone of voice accounts for 38% and
- Body language accounts for 55% of the message.

Our body language and tone of voice should be consistent with the words we use. This is only possible when we say what we mean to say and say it rightly. Otherwise we can confuse people and reduce the prospect of getting our message across to be understood. Non-verbal communication can lead to misunderstandings, communication failure and even conflicts if the interlocutors are careless.

Non-verbal communication includes:

(P)OSTURES & GESTURES

(E)YE CONTACT

(O)RIENTATION

(P)RESENTATION

(L)OOKS

(E)PRESSIONS OF EMOTION

Body language and kinesics are based on the behavioral patterns of non-verbal communication. Body language can actually contradict verbal communications and reveal our inner feelings about any particular person or topic either intentionally or unintentionally.

The way in which you fold your arms, cross your legs, sit, stand, walk, move your head, eyes, lips reveal what you may be thinking or feeling. For example, you may be sitting and conversing with a person; suddenly, he leans forward and with both arms clutches the chair. By doing so he non-verbally communicates to you his desire to end the meeting. Body language has shed new light on the dynamics of relationships.

### ***Hands Gestures***

Hands and arms are used by most of us to communicate our thoughts. People rub arms together, keep their arms closed, and clench the fists. All these tell what the person has in his mind involuntarily. It is a way that people non-verbally communicate positive expectations. Hands clenched together seems to be a confident gesture as some people who use it are often smiling and sound happy. However, if the hands are clenched too tightly, it is indicative of frustration or hostile attitude.

### **Eye Gestures/facial expression**

Facial expression, offers the most readily observable group of gestures. We focus our eyes on the face more often than on any other part of the body, and the expressions we see there have widely accepted meanings.

If a prospect's eyes are downcast and face turned away, you're being shut out, however, if the mouth move, he is probably considering your presentation. If his eyes engage yours for several seconds at a time with a slight, one-sided smile extending at least to nose level, he is weighing your proposal. It is only when you see 'eye to eye' with another person that a real basis for communication can be established. Other forms of nonverbal communication include: Touch, smell, distance.

The number of people in a communication situation affects the use of non-verbal communication. The more the persons involved, the more complex the use and understanding of the non-verbal communication becomes. However, to decipher the non-verbal communication it is important to see, interpret and understand them holistically and in a context, while identifying the different types of personalities involved.

### **Levels of communication**

1. Intrapersonal (Within a person)
2. Interpersonal (Face to face)
3. Group communication
4. Mass communication
5. Inter country/ Development

### **Communication Barriers**

#### **1. Physiological Barriers**

Physiological barriers may result from individuals' personal discomfort, caused, for example, by ill health, poor eye sight, or hearing difficulties. These may also affect one's personality in many different and mostly negative ways. This can best be handled by working on developing a positive perception as certain physiological features contributing to barriers may not be curable.

#### **2. Physical Barriers**

Physical barriers include:

- Office doors, barrier screens, separate areas for people of different status
- Large working areas or working in one unit that is physically separate from others.
- Distance



Research shows that one of the most important factors in building cohesive teams is proximity. Proximity in different cultures is different and therefore needs to be taken in the right context. It has been observed that people coming from rural backgrounds with more physical space available may not feel comfortable in closed quarters as they tend to have larger personal spaces as compared to people living in urban conditions. This aspect alone can become a significant psychological barrier if they subconsciously feel “threatened” by inadvertent “invasion” of their personal space in case an urbanite approaches them in close proximity considering it as a normal personal space.

### **3. Cultural Barriers**

Culture prescribes behavior. Humans can adapt to different culture once we come to accept it and appreciate that cultures are different so that we can be recognized from others and that no specific connotations need to be attached to one culture or the other.

### **4. Language Barriers**

Language that describes what we want to say in our terms may present barriers to others who are not familiar with our expressions, buzz-words, and jargon. When we couch our communication in such language, it is a way of excluding others. In a global setting the greatest compliment we can pay another person is to talk in their language.

### **5. Interpersonal Barriers**

Withdrawal is an absence of interpersonal contact. It is both refusals to be in touch with others.

### **6. Psychological Barriers**

There are 3 types of psychological barriers would be discussed as they are the most common ones.

- a. **Perceptual barriers**
- b. **Emotional Barriers, and**
- c. **Experiential barriers.**

### **Perceptual barriers**

The problem with communicating with others is that we all see the world differently. A bad experience would perceptually block out unpleasant things. This could be in the shape of avoiding it and if that is not possible by altering the behaviors i.e., response types in different ways. Similarly, retention filters out things that feel good, and gives the tendency to forget those things that are painful. It is very interesting to note that how our experiences taint or color our perceptions. Perceptual barriers can significantly alter our understanding and thus affect our communication. They are deep rooted and work in conjunction with our experiences.

### **Emotional barriers**

One of the other chief psychological barriers to open and free communication is the emotional barrier. It is comprised mainly of fear, mistrust, and suspicion. As mentioned earlier the roots of our emotional mistrust of others lie in our childhood and infancy when we were taught to be careful what we said to others.

### **Experiential barriers**

Experiential barriers on the other hand become barriers by virtue of not having experienced them leading to altered interpretation and comprehension. Our experience shapes our view of the world. For example, when children experience trauma at the hands of trusted adults (especially family members) their emotional

link with the adult world is severed, creating distrust. They are left with three companions: guilt, fear and feelings of inferiority.

## **7. Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are widely circulated ideas or assumptions about particular groups. Stereotypes are usually negative attitudes which people use to justify discrimination of conflict against others. According to Pennington (1986) " there are two characteristics of stereotypes

1. People are categorized on the basis of very visible characteristics e.g. race, nationality, sex, dress and bodily appearance;
2. All members of a particular group are assumed to have the same characteristics; and

The effects of stereotyping are seen as gross over simplified and over generalized descriptions. They operate to overestimate differences existing between groups and under estimate differences within groups.

Stereotypes distort reality since the over estimation between groups and under estimation within groups bear little relation to the truth.

Stereotyping acts as a barrier to communication because people make pre-conceived judgment about people which are unfounded if their character does not relate to their appearance.

Stereotyping has a halo effect. **Halo effect** is the use of a single attribute to describe a person or object fully. For example, if a person is friendly we may use

this attribute to assume that they are punctual and good at their job. Another important aspect of stereotyping is perception.

## **8. Authority**

Barriers to communication for one reason or the other often get neglected. Knowing them is synonymous to knowing about one's own barriers sprouting out of one's personality. Barriers to communication can lead to misunderstanding and confusion.

### **How to be a good communicator**

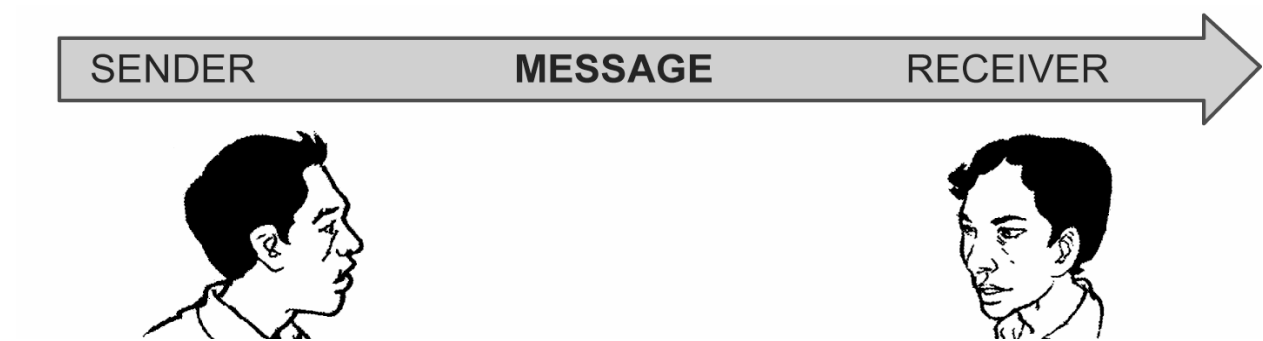
To be a good communicator, one needs to:

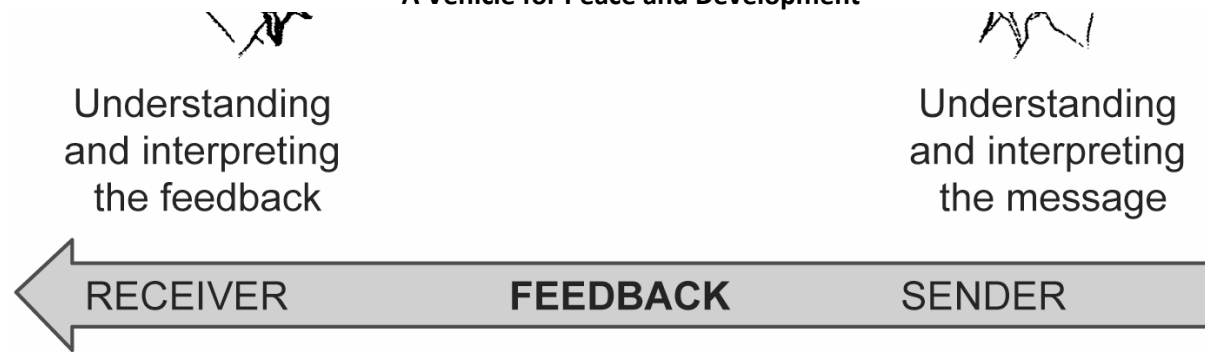
- a) Express own reflections and ideas clearly
- b) Develop relationships
- c) Provide feedback (answers, reacts)
- d) Be open to others' feedback (accept others answer without prejudice, references etc.
- e) Respect attitudes and opinions of others
- f) Be tolerant to different customs and cultures
- g) Give full attention to people while they are talking to you.
- h) Encourage other people to talk, and ask appropriate questions.
- i) Present your ideas so that others are receptive to your point of view.
- j) Treat people fairly and let others know how you want to be treated.
- k) Value teamwork and know how to build cooperation and commitment.
- l) Strive to understand other people and to be empathetic.
- m) Be able to easily win people's trust and respect.
- n) Check to make sure you have understood what other people are trying to communicate.

- o) Follow through on your commitments.
- p) Be able to work with people you have difficulties with without becoming negative.

### **Elements of Communication**

There are models which try to explain the communication process. A model is an explanation of the occurrences in a phenomenon. Elements of communication have been explained in different models which attempt to explain the communication process. Communication is a two-way process that results in a shared meaning or common understanding between the sender and the receiver. An understanding of how communication works can help us to understand and improve our communication. The elements of communication enable us to understand how communication works. The basic communication model consists of five elements of communication: the sender, the receiver, the message, the channel and feedback. These are the elements of communication and are explained below:





Note: Noise is ever present though unseen.

### Source

This is the originating point of any communication act. It is the source who gets the urge that necessitates communication for the purpose of satisfying that urge. The stronger the stimulus or the urge the greater is the need to communicate. The greater the need to communicate, the more the need is for effectiveness. The source is also referred to as the sender, or encoder.

**Encoding is the process of putting ones thoughts into words.**

**Encoder is the person who translates his/her thoughts into meaningful words.**

### Receiver

The receiver means the party to whom the sender transmits the message. A receiver can be one person or an entire audience of people. A receiver is the eventual recipient of the message. **The receiver is also the decoder of the message. Decoding of a message is as integral to communication as encoding it.** **Decoding is the process of giving meaning to the encoded message.** It can also be referred to as extracting the embedded meaning or interpreting what was encoded by the sender. The ability of the receiver in decoding the message correctly is decisive in understanding the message in its holistic sense.

### Noise/ Barriers

Anything that is competing the source's and the receivers' attention is called noise. Barriers to communication are the factors that contribute towards the total or partial loss or failure of the communication. In simple terms they can be referred to as those features that act as blocks to the desired outcome of any communication process. They are many and very multidimensional in nature. Noise can be internal or external.

- a) Internal: Noise that is coming from within the interlocutors such as a headache, anger, stress, e.t.c
- b) External noise: Noise from the environment such as; cars passing, children shouting, siren from an ambulance e.t.c.

### **Message**

The message is the most crucial element of effective communication. A message can come in many different forms, such as an oral presentation, a written document, an advertisement or just a comment. The message is not necessarily what the sender intends it to be. Rather, the message is what the receiver perceives the message to be. As a result, the sender must not only compose the message carefully, but also evaluate the ways in which the message can be interpreted.

### **Channel**

The message travels from one point to another via a channel of communication. The channel sits between the sender and receiver. There are many channels, or types, of communication channels for example, from the spoken word to radio, television, an Internet site or something written, like a book, letter or magazine.

Every channel of communication has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, one disadvantage of the written word, on a computer screen or in a book,

is that the receiver cannot evaluate the tone of the message. For this reason, effective communicators word written communications clearly so they don't rely on a specific tone of voice to convey the message accurately. The advantages of television as a channel for communication include its expansive reach to a wide audience and the sender's ability to further manipulate the message using editing and special effects.

## **Feedback**

The last element of effective communication is feedback. This is the response from the receiver and later the source. Feedback is the receiver's response or reaction to the sender's message. The receiver can transmit feedback through asking questions, making comments or just supporting the message that was delivered. Feedback helps the sender to determine how the receiver interpreted the message and how it can be improved. Without feedback the communication process breaks down. The feedback given determines the direction the communication process will take.

*A communication process that employs all the elements works as follows:*

The source has an urge-a need that requires being satisfied encodes the message in verbal and/or non-verbal language that is considered to best communicate the message according to the intent..

In order to make that happen, it has to be in a form and format that conveys the intent in the best possible manner.

This message is encapsulated in the linguistic conventions such as symbols i.e., words besides signs that can be referred to as non-verbal language.

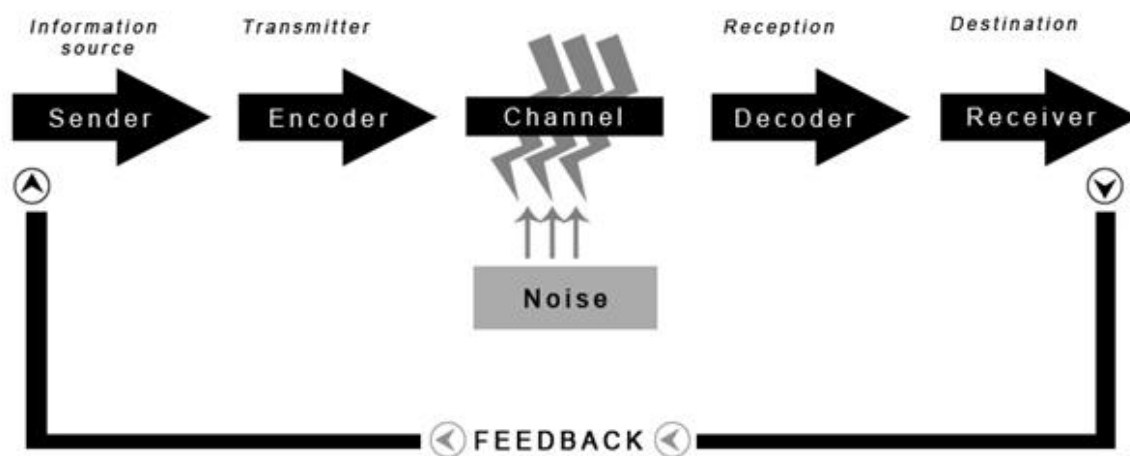


The message will go through a channel, a means of communication such as e-mail, face to face or phone conversation, letter, presentation etc.

The receiver will then decode the message using conventions, cultural or contextual background, and language skills. The message that is received or interpreted might or might not be the same as the sent one and may not necessarily meet the intent of the messenger.

## MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

The purpose of a “model” is to offer a visual representation of a concept with the intent of facilitating its understanding. Models of communication refers to the conceptual model used to explain the human communication process. The first major model for communication came in 1949 by Shannon and Warren Weaver.



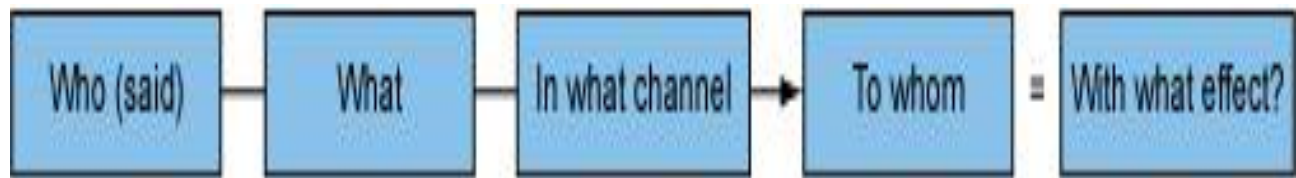
SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Following the basic concept, communication is the process of sending and receiving messages or transferring information from one part (sender) to another (receiver). Traditionally speaking, there are three standard models of the

communication process: Linear, Interactive, and Transactional, and each offers a slightly different perspective on the communication process.

### **Linear Model**

The linear model views communication as a one-way or linear process in which the speaker speaks and the listener listens. Laswell's (1948) model was based on the five questions below, which effectively describe how communication works:

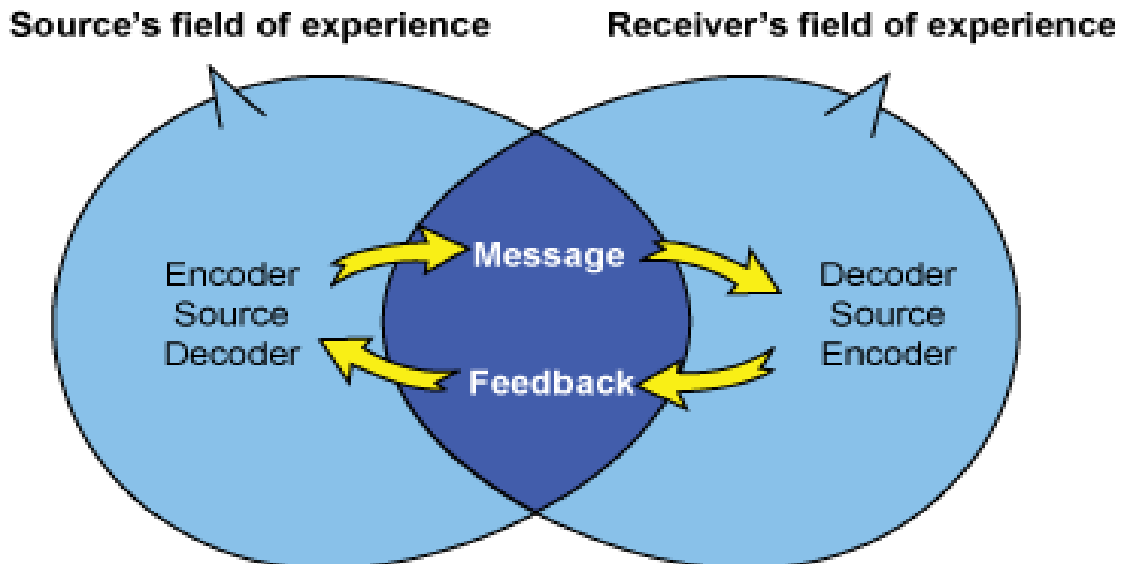


The main flaw in the linear model is that it depicts communication as a one-way process where speakers only speak and never listen. It also implies that listeners listen and never speak or send messages.

### **Interactive Model**

Schramm (1955) in Wood (2009) came out with a more interactive model that saw the receiver or listener providing feedback to the sender or speaker. The speaker or sender of the message also listens to the feedback given by the receiver or listener. Both the speaker and the listener take turns to speak and listen to each other. Feedback is given either verbally or non-verbally, or in both ways.

This model also indicates that the speaker and listener communicate better if they have common fields of experience, or fields which overlap



Source: Wood, J. T. (2009). *Communication in our lives* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA:  
Thomson-Wadsworth

The main drawback in the interactive model is that it does not indicate that communicators can both send and receive messages simultaneously. This model also fails to show that communication is a dynamic process which changes over time.

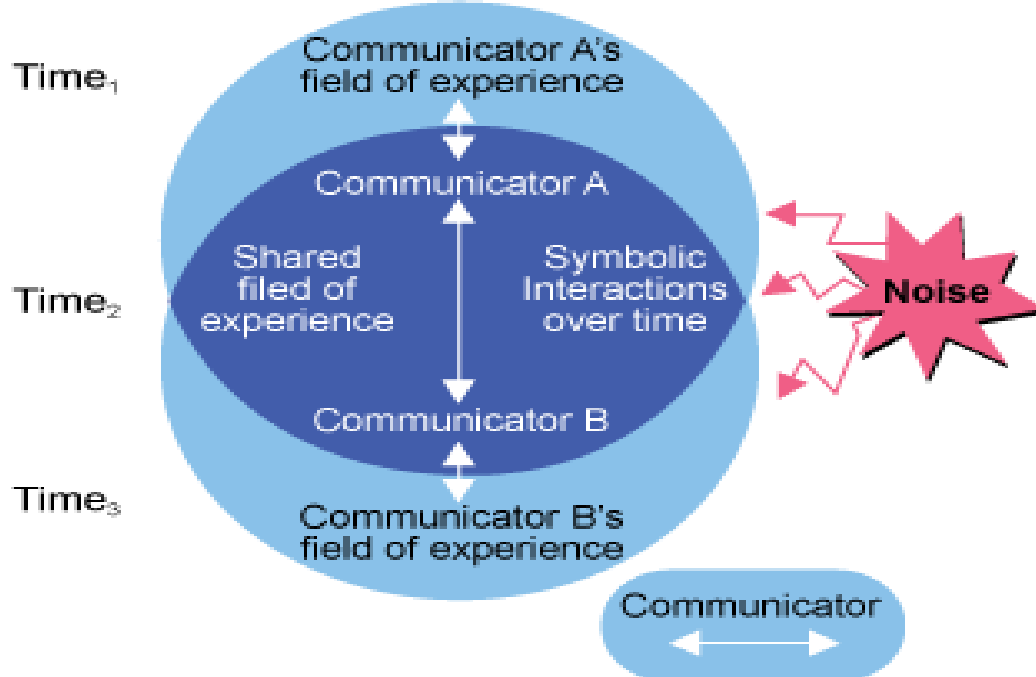
### **Transactional Model**

The transactional model shows that the elements in communication are interdependent. Each person in the communication act is both a speaker and a listener, and can be simultaneously sending and receiving messages.

There are three implications in the transactional model:

- i. “Transactional” means that communication is an ongoing and continuously changing process. You are changing, the people with whom you are communicating are changing, and your environment is also continually changing as well.
- ii. In any transactional process, each element exists in relation to all the other elements. There is this interdependence where there can be no source without a receiver and no message without a source.
- iii. Each person in the communication process reacts depending on factors such as their background, prior experiences, attitudes, cultural beliefs and self-esteem.

Transactional model of communication takes into account “noise” or interference in communication as well as the time factor. The outer lines of the model indicate that communication happens within systems that both communicators share (e.g., a common campus, hometown, and culture) or personal systems (e.g., family, religion, friends, etc). It also takes into account changes that happen in the communicators’ fields of personal and common experiences. The model also labels each communicator as both sender as well as receiver simultaneously.



### Effective Communication

Although we can all communicate, not all our communication acts are effective. We must all strive to be effective communicators.

#### So, what is effective communication?

This is that communication which produces results. It is communication where the intended message is delivered clearly, and the desired feedback is achieved. It is communication that does not give room for misunderstanding. It is the best form of communication.

Communication can be effective or it can be misunderstood leading to ineffectiveness. Meaning communication must be effective. Ineffective communication is expensive to the participants because it blocks results. In other words communication is a matter of effectiveness. Effectiveness is a measure of

outcome. Effective communication therefore results in the form of desired outcome.

Effective Communication is communication that conveys information to another person efficiently and effectively and so achieves desired outcome.

It is important to note that not all communication are effective. This course aims to help the learners to become effective communicators both at the university and later in their professional fields.

Communication is a process that can be marked with error such as with messages muddled (i.e., mixed up by the sender, or misinterpreted by the recipient).

Miscommunication is avoidable. However, if this is not detected, it can cause tremendous confusion, waste efforts and miss opportunities. In fact, communication is successful only when both the sender and the receiver reach a common understanding regarding the same information as a result of the communication process.

Effective communication is about receiving information from others with as little distortion as possible. Communication is a matter of effectiveness, which is dependent on the interlocutors' (speakers') communication competency. In other words its effectiveness is dependent on one's competency in communication. We can therefore say that communication involves intents and efforts from both the sender of the message and the receiver.

### **Effective Communication Skills**

Effective Communication skills must include: communicating using

- Eye contact & visible mouth
- Body language

- Silence
- Checking for understanding
- Smiling face
- Summarizing what has been said
- Encouragement to continue
- Asking some questions

### **The 7 Cs of Communication**

The 7 Cs provide a checklist for making sure that your meetings, emails, conference calls, reports, and presentations are well constructed and clear so your audience gets your message. According to the 7Cs, communication needs to be:

- Clear.
- Concise.
- Concrete.
- Correct.
- Coherent.
- Complete.
- Courteous.

#### **1 Clear**

When writing or speaking to someone, be clear about your goal or message. What is your purpose in communicating with this person? If you're not sure, then your audience won't be sure either. To be clear, try to minimize the number of ideas in each sentence. Make sure that it's easy for your reader to understand your meaning. People shouldn't have to "read between the lines" and make assumptions on their own to understand what you're trying to say.

#### **2. Concise**

When you are concise in your communication, you stick to the point and keep it brief. Your audience doesn't want to read six sentences when you could communicate your message in three.

### **3. Concrete**

When your message is concrete, then your audience has a clear picture of what you're telling them. There are details (but not too many!) and vivid facts. Your message is solid.

Look at these two examples:

For Example:

- a) *The Lunchbox Wizard will save you time every day.*
- b) *How much time do you spend every day packing your kids' lunches? No more! Just take a complete Lunchbox Wizard from your refrigerator each day to give your kids a healthy lunch AND have more time to play or read with them!*

### **4. Correct**

When your communication is correct, it fits your audience. And correct communication is also error free communication.

### **5. Coherent**

When your communication is coherent, it's logical. All points are connected and relevant to the main topic, and the tone and flow of the text is consistent.

### **6. Complete**

In a complete message, the audience has everything they need to be informed and, if applicable, take action. Does your message include a "call to action", so that your audience clearly knows what you want them to do? Have you included all relevant information - contact names, dates, times, locations, and so on?



## 7. Courteous/consideration

Courteous communication is friendly, open, and honest and does not illicit emotions. There are no hidden insults or passive aggressive tones. You keep your reader's viewpoint in mind, and you're empathetic to their needs. You must always put yourself in the shoes of the person you are talking to and ask yourself how you would feel if you were to be addressed the way you are addressing your receiver. Consideration in communication creates a healthy work environment.

### Chapter Two

#### Listening Skills



"We were given two ears but only one mouth, because listening is twice as hard as talking."

Listeners must first hear what is said. Listening skills involve identifying and selecting relevant points recognised as having meaning; that are understood and held in *short-term memory*. These can be related to what has gone before and to what comes after. Any information considered important is selected and stored for future reference in the *long term memory*.

Decoding (understanding) a message is generally easier for the listener if a person is speaking rather than reading something out loud. In addition the speaker's facial expressions, and the stress placed on words help the listener to understand the message.

Developing effective listening skills involves two specific steps (Hartley & Bruckman, 2002). These are:

1. To develop the ability to recognize and deal with barriers that prevents you listening with full attention.
2. To develop and use behaviors which help you to listen. Such behaviors can also serve to let the other person know that you are giving them your full attention.

Listening is the absorption of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain. Listening leads to the understanding of facts and ideas. To listen is to pay attention, or sticking to the task at hand in spite of distractions. It requires concentration, which is the focusing of your thoughts upon one particular problem.

A person who incorporates listening with concentration is actively listening. Active listening is a method of responding to another that encourages communication.

Active listening is composed of six distinct components

- **Hearing:** The physiological process of receiving sound and/or other stimuli.
- **Attending:** The conscious and unconscious process of focusing attention on external stimuli.
- **Interpreting:** The process of decoding the symbols or behavior attended to.
- **Evaluating:** The process of deciding the value of the information to the receiver.

- Remembering: The process of placing the appropriate information into short-term or long-term storage.
- Responding: The process of giving feedback to the source and/or other receivers.

### **Barriers to Listening**

The following list identifies just some possible barriers to effective listening;

1. sources of noise
2. Forming a judgment or evaluation before we understand what is being said, or 'jumping to conclusions'.
3. Hearing what we want to hear.
4. Tuning out a point of view that differs from our own.
5. Formulating and rehearsing our response.
6. Being inattentive - thinking about something else entirely.
7. Having a closed mind- you do not want to hear what the person has to say.
8. Feeling anxious or self-conscious.
9. Judging the person, either positively or negatively.
10. Subjective biases based on ignorance or prejudice.
11. Cultural issues, e.g. listening to the differences in pronunciation of different accent, rather than the content of the message.
12. Excessive and incessant talking or interrupting.

It is important that such barriers to listening are recognized and dealt with. With developing awareness, we can have more control over those barriers that are internal to ourselves, and can adopt and use more helpful listening behaviors.

### **LISTENING EFFECTIVELY TIPS**

Listening effectively is hearing and understanding what a speaker is saying and how it applies to you, and then remembering it for future use and evaluation. There are ways to improve your listening skills for lectures. The following is a list of some basic techniques:

1. Recognize how ideas are organized. Lectures usually begin with some type of introduction, followed by a thesis statement which is supported by additional information. Most professors bring closure to their lecture by summarizing what they have covered. Learn to identify the lecture style that is used by your professor.
2. Become involved in what is being said. Be an avid listener. Constantly analyze what is being said.
3. Cut through (or screen out) distractions.
  - background noise
  - unusual accents, dialects, and language mistakes
  - speaker disorganization, emotion, or habits
  - unrelated material
  - your own inner voice
4. Organize statements into main points and supporting reasons. Using an outline form may be helpful.
5. Discriminate between relevancies and irrelevancies. Remember that not all information is important.
6. Maintain an active body state. Keeping alert and having eye-contact with the speaker will help you listen more effectively.

In order to improve your listening skills, you will need to practice using the suggested techniques until they become automatic

## Chapter Three

### Reading Skills

#### What is READING?

Reading means to CONSTRUCT MEANING FROM TEXT. READING IS A PROCESS THAT MUST INCLUDE THINKING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER READING. We read in order to MEANING and UNDERSTANDING. The correct READING SPEED is the one that gets you that meaning and understanding.

Reading is an art form and good readers do certain things that get them the meaning that the process is designed to extract.

#### **How to improve your comprehension during reading:**

1. Begin from what you already know (activating prior knowledge).
2. Always try to make sense of what you are reading (context).
3. Ask yourself questions; before, during and after reading.
4. Predict and think about what will happen next in the text, or how your questions will be answered.
5. Read with a purpose. Know why you are reading and what you are reading to find out.

6. Know that as a good reader you often REREAD parts of, or even, the whole text two or more times in order to make sense of what you are reading.

### **The SQ4R Method of reading effectively**

SQ4R is a flexible reading strategy because it engages the reader during each phase of the reading process. Readers preview/SURVEY (S) the text material to develop predictions and set the purpose for the reading by generating QUESTIONS (Q) about the topic. They READ (1R) actively, searching for answers to those questions. They monitor their comprehension as they summarize WRITE (2R) & RECITE (3R). They evaluate their comprehension through REVIEW (4R) activities. Two general learning components must be addressed as you begin the reading process and the SQ4R method will activate them:

First, place the reading in CONTEXT. What is the reading about and do you have any prior knowledge about this subject to help you extract the meaning that you are looking for? The SURVEY and SYSTEMATIC reading puts this process into motion. You get an overview that will "jog your memory" as you search for prior knowledge on the subject. Ask questions about what you don't know. Make the questions simple and general if you don't have much prior knowledge and more specific if this is an area of study that is familiar to you. Using these questions will GUIDE YOUR SPEED AND COMPREHENSION as you attempt to answer them.

REMEMBER, THE STUDENT THAT IS ENGAGED IN READING IS MOTIVATED, STRATEGIC, KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND SOCIALLY INTERACTIVE.

## How to Use SQ4R

### 1. Survey what you are about to read

- Systematic Reading
- Think about the title: What do you know about this subject?
- What do I want to know?
- Glance over headings and/skim the first sentences of paragraphs.
- Look at illustrations and graphic aids.
- Read the first paragraph.
- Read the last paragraph or summary.

### 2. Question

Turn the title and sub-titles into wh-element question. This becomes the major purpose for your reading.

- Write down any questions that come to mind during the survey.
- Turn headings into questions.
- Turn subheadings, illustrations, and graphic aids into questions.
- Write down unfamiliar vocabulary and determine the meaning.

### 3. Read Actively

- Read to search for answers to the questions set.
- Respond to objectives and use context clues for unfamiliar words.
- React to unclear passages, confusing terms, and questionable statements by generating additional questions.

#### 4. Recite

- Look away from the answers and the book to recall what was read.
- Recite answers to the questions aloud or in writing.
- Reread text for unanswered questions.

#### 5. wRite

- Make "maps" for yourself.
- Reduce the information
- Reread or skim to locate and prove your points.
- Write down the key terms and ideas in outline form.
- Always read/question/recite before marking or taking down notes.
- Check yourself against the text. Correct and add to your answer.

#### 6. Review

- Answer the major purpose questions.
- Look over answers and all parts of the chapter to organize the information.
- Summarize the information learned by creating a graphic organizer (concept map) that depicts the main ideas, by drawing a flow chart, by writing a summary,
- You can also summarize by participating in a group discussion, or by writing an explanation of how this material has changed your perceptions or applies to your life.

### Chapter Four



To succeed in your studies at the university you must study. Studying is revising the notes you took during lectures, and reading text books with the aim of understanding better what you are reading. For better understanding, it is important that you as a student come up with a study plan that works best for you. We are going to discuss some of the study plans and study tips that will help you to study better and gain good grades at the end of your undergraduate studies.

### **Study tips**

#### **Prepare a study timetable**

1. **Draw up a study timetable** (see samples below) and block in all activities, work, lectures, and any household or other responsibilities you may have. Include meal times and travel time. Be realistic. This should be an actual timetable, which is possible, not some ideal that can never be achieved. Make enough copies to cover all the weeks leading up to exams or assessment.
2. **Work out your most effective study times.** When do you study best?  
Morning, afternoon or evening?
3. Consider: Which subjects need the most study and revision? Estimate how many hours you think you need for each subject and try to match this with the hours available in your weekly planner.
4. Block in some study times, preferably 2-4 hours at a time, with 5-10 minutes' break every 40-50 minutes.
5. Start at exam periods or due dates for assignments and **work backwards**, blocking in more study time in the relevant subject closer to the exam/due date. Make sure that you prepare for each exam over several

days and don't fill up the last few days too heavily. Also put in any events which may affect your study times, such as birthdays, social events and work functions.

6. You may want to plan in detail for each study session. Write down which lecture/topic/text you will be researching/ reviewing. This way, you can ensure that you will cover all the required information in the times you have allocated. Consider: What do I want to achieve in this session? (eg: summary/ notes / list of definitions/ language exercise/ essay plan/ list of resources/ timeline). Where will I need to study? Do I need access to a computer/ the internet/ the library?

7. If you have some smaller amounts of time available for study, consider how they could be used: skim reading an article, proofing a draft, sorting a bibliography, organising reference cards, etc. Travel time on public transport can also be used for reading.

**Start using your study timetable.**

See how well it works. What did you leave out? It can be changed as you go, but do this consciously: look at what is not working, which areas you need more time in and change the timetable. This is much better than just throwing the timetable away. Then you can be sure that you will still cover all the material you need to.

➤ **Establish your prime study time**

Your prime study time(PST) is that time when your concentration is at its highest. Everyone has a PST and they all know it. That is why some people wake up early in

the morning to study (Such people their PST is early morning) while some stay up late to study.

Study the subject you are having trouble with during your PST.

- Find a suitable room with comfortable furniture and good lighting
- Set a regular time to study
- Remove distractions
- Avoid clutter

Clutter is anything that will distract you from reading what you had scheduled to read. Clutter includes books from other subjects, e.g. if you are studying Literature, then mathematics, Biology and other subject books are clutter because they can distract you from reading. Newspapers and story books are also clutter.

- Record assignments in an assignment book or on a calendar
- Take notes in class and review them regularly
- Make ONE minute act as TWO minutes

Anytime you have to wait for something read your short notes. You will be able to kill two birds with one stone. You will be able to do two things at the same time: wait as you read for example,

When in the bus going to school, read your short notes. When you are in the restaurant waiting to be served, read your short notes.

- Study for tests

### **TYPES OF STUDY PLANS**

It is important to note that there are other study plans that a student can use, but we are choosing to focus on these because we feel that they are the most applicable to our students. They can all be used simultaneously by one student.

#### **1. Preview**

Preview is reading about the topic you are going to be lectured on before the lecture. You are often given a course outline beforehand so that it can help you in previewing. Preview gives you an upper hand because you will be able to follow and understand what the lecturer is talking about. It enhances your chances of retaining what is taught. Remember knowledge starts from known to unknown. You can also preview notes from the previous lecture so that you can understand the link between the previous lecture and the current lecture.

## **2. Studying with Breaks**

Studying with Breaks also called spaced study is a very good technique for studying. It involves studying for a period then taking a short break followed by another study session. For example, you can study for 2 hours then take a 5 minute break followed by another 1 hour of study.

Spaced study is good because if used well the student will be able to lock what they are studying in their long term memory (LTM) during the breaks. The breaks act as a reward. Humans thrive when they are rewarded. Your mind will also appreciate the reward.

During the breaks reflect on what you have studied. Do not use the breaks negatively.

## **3. Group Study**

Studying with a group of your friends can be both a fun and rewarding study method. For effective studying, it is important that you choose your group members wisely and follow a few rules.

**Study groups should:**

- Not be the sole method of study and they are not for everyone
- Be a form of 'active learning' - the strongest kind of learning
- Not let one member of the group dominate
- Meet no more than 2-3 times a week
- Establish responsibilities for each group member
- Design rules dealing with respect for each member
- Provide contact information for group members

**Importance of study groups**

- Help you and your group members:
  - See the material from a different perspective
  - Stay motivated and commit more time to study
  - Share/compare notes and study tips
  - Engage in discussions and debates on selected topics
  - Pick up new tips and material from your peers
  - Quiz each other on factual material

## **Chapter Five**

### **Taking Examinations**

An **examination**, commonly known as **exam**, is a set of questions or exercises evaluating acquired knowledge or skill. It is an assessment intended to measure a student's knowledge, skills, aptitude, and creativity among others. Examinations are used as an evaluative tool evaluating whether any learning has taken place.

Examinations test the student's ability to recall and re use the knowledge learnt to create something new. An exam is an official evaluation tool used to test knowledge or ability in a particular subject. In the university, an exam is used to evaluate both teaching and learning.

## **Types of Examination questions**

Generally, question types fall into two categories:

**1. Objective;** which require students to supply a word or short phrase to answer a question or complete a statement. Objective exams are easy to take and mark. They test the students' ability to recall what was learnt. Examples of objective type questions include: multiple choice, true-false, matching, filling in the gaps, and outlining or stating among others. Objective exams test the first **two** levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Blooms taxonomy is explained below). Objective exams at the university are given as sit in CATs.

Objective tests are appropriate when:

- The group to be tested is large and the test may be reused.
- Highly reliable scores to be obtained as efficiently as possible.
- Impartiality of evaluation, fairness, test scores which can be measured are required.
- The weight of the questions are a less marks such as 2mk, 5 Mks.

**2. Subjective** These are those exam questions that require thinking and recreating what was learnt. Subjective exams questions are essay type questions which permit the student to organize and present an original answer. Examples: short answer

essay, extended-response essay, problem solving, performance test items. Essay tests are appropriate when:

- The group to be tested is small and the test is not to be reused.
- The teacher wishes to encourage and reward the development of student skill in writing.
- The teacher is more interested in exploring student attitudes than in measuring his/her achievement.
- When the weight of the exam is great. The awarded marks range from 10mks onward.

Either essay or objective tests can be used to:

- Measure almost any important educational achievement a written test can measure
- Test understanding and ability to apply principles.
- Test ability to think critically.
- Test ability to solve problems.

## **BLOOMS TAXONOMY**

Bloom Taxonomy was conceptualized and proposed in the year 1956 by Benjamin Bloom. It was a framework, classifying educational goals and objectives and levels of knowledge including how they can be appropriately measured. The terms "taxonomy" and "classification" are synonymous. Bloom's Taxonomy is a multi-tiered model of classifying thinking into six cognitive levels of complexity. The classification's relevant area of application is in academic understanding with the classification of thought process in learning and teaching. In 2001 one of the

original team members, David Krathwohl, and a student of Bloom's, Lorin Anderson, spearheaded an effort to revise the original cognitive taxonomy. The ideas applying Blooms taxonomy in assessment was taken from this revision of Blooms taxonomy. Testing the students' cognitive level is the prime objective of any assessment system.

The taxonomy is made up of a six level classification system that uses observed student behaviour to conclude the level of cognitive achievement.

S/N	Level
1	KNOWLEDGE
2	COMPREHENSION
3	APPLICATION
4	ANALYSIS
5	SYNTHESIS
6	EVALUATION

These levels are what guide examination setting at the university level.

### **Blooms Taxonomy and examination questions/ Learning**

Level	Learner Action	Question Cues
<b>Knowledge</b>	Recall content in the exact form that it was presented. Memorisation of definitions, formulas, or procedures are examples of knowledge-level functioning	<b>List, define, label, identify, name</b>
<b>Comprehension</b>	Restate material in their own words, or can recognise previously unseen examples of a concept.	<b>Describe, associate, categorise, summarise</b>
<b>Application</b>	Apply rules to a problem, without being given the rule or formula for solving the problem.	<b>Apply, calculate, illustrate, solve</b>



<b>Analysis</b>	Break complex concepts or situations down into their component parts, and analyse how the parts are related to one another.	<b>Analyse, compare, separate, order, explain</b>
<b>Synthesis</b>	Rearrange component parts to form a new whole.	<b>Combine, modify, rearrange, "what-if"</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluate or make judgments on the worth of a concept, object, etc. for a purpose	<b>Assess, decide, grade, recommend, explain, judge</b>

## Different Types of Questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy

### Lower Order

#### Knowledge (Remembering)

These types of questions test the students' ability to memorize and to recall terms, facts and details without necessarily understanding the concept.

**Key Words:** Memorize, Define, Identify, Repeat, Recall, State, Write, List & Name.

#### Comprehension (Understanding)

These questions test the students' ability to summarize and describe in their own words without necessarily relating it to anything.

**Key Words:** Describe, Distinguish, Explain, Interpret, Predict, Recognize & Summarize.

### Higher Order

### **Application (Transferring)**

Application questions encourage students to apply or transfer learning to their own life or to a context different than one in which it was learned.

**Key Words:** Apply, Compare, Contrast, Demonstrate, Examine, Relate, Solve & Use.

### **Analysis (Relating)**

These questions encourage students to break material into parts, describe patterns and relationships among parts, to subdivide information and to show how it is put together.

**Key Words:** Analyze, Differentiate, Distinguish, Explain, Infer, Relate, Research & Separate.

### **Synthesis (Creating)**

These questions encourage students create something new by using a combination of ideas from different sources to form a new whole.

**Key Words:** Arrange, Combine, Create, Design, Develop Formulate, Integrate & Organize.

### **Evaluation (Judging)**

Evaluation questions encourage students to develop opinions and make value decisions about issues based on specific criteria.

**Key Words:** Assess, Critique, Determine, Evaluate, Judge, Justify, Measure & Recommend.

As students you must be sensitive to identify the level of knowledge being tested in each exam question. This will enable you to map up a road plan for answering that question.

The weight of the exam should also be a guide as to how much writing is needed.

### **Test Taking Strategies**

Examinations are a fact of life in college. But the only time an exam should be a trial is when you aren't prepared for it, and the best sign that you aren't prepared is when you have to stay up all night to "cram." Cramming won't do very much for you (except make you so tired that when you take the exam you won't be able to think clearly enough to answer the questions you DO know).

Here are some tips to help you develop test taking skills:

#### **BEFORE THE TEST**

1. Start preparing for your exams the first day of class. You can do this by reading your syllabus carefully to find out when your exams will be, how many there will be, and how much they are weighed into your grade.
2. Plan reviews as part of your regularly weekly study schedule; consequently, you review over the whole quarter rather than just at exam time.
3. Reviews are much more than reading and rereading all assignments. You need to read over your lecture notes and ask yourself questions on the material you don't know well. (If your notes are relatively complete and well organized, you may find that very little rereading of the textbook for detail is needed.) You may want to create a study group for these reviews to reinforce your learning.
4. Review for several short periods rather than one long period. You will find that you retain information better and get less fatigued.

5. Turn the main points of each topic or heading into questions and check to see if the answers come to you quickly and correctly. Try to predict examination questions; then outline your answers.
6. It may seem "old-fashioned", but flashcards may be a helpful way to review in courses that have many unfamiliar terms. Review the card in random order using only those terms that you have difficulty remembering.

## **DURING THE TEST**

There are also some things to keep in mind when you are **TAKING** the test.

1. First, read the directions carefully!! Many points have been lost because students didn't follow the directions.
2. Note start and end times and divide the time you have with the questions you will be answering.
3. Remember to preview the test to see how much time you need to allot for each section. If the test is all multiple choice questions, it is good to know that immediately.
4. Work on the "easiest" parts first. If your strength is essay questions, answer those first to get the maximum points. Pace yourself to allow time for the more difficult parts.
5. When answering essay questions use the technique of writing a topical paragraph. Organization, clear thinking, and good writing is important, but so is neatness. Be sure to make your writing legible. Introduce and conclude each point.
6. Save time at the end of the exam to review your test and make sure you haven't left out any answers or parts of answers. This is difficult to do

under the stress of exams, but it often keeps you from making needless errors.

7. Use your first instinct. As you read a question, attempt to answer it *before* reading the answers listed. After doing so, select from the list that most closely matches your answer.
8. **It is recommended to bring a watch.** This will help you keep track of time in case the clock is in a location hard for you to see.
9. **Take a few deep breaths when you get stuck**

If you come across a question you're not sure how to answer in the exam, stop for a moment and take a few deep breathes (in for the count of 3 and out for the count of 3). If you are not sure how to answer it there and then, move on to another question. The worst thing you can do is start to panic, because as they say 'stress makes you stupid'. You won't be able to think clearly.

## **AFTER THE TEST**

If the instructor reviews the exam in class, make sure you attend. Many students choose to skip class of the day of the review because "nothing is happening" that day. On the contrary, this is an important class to attend because it helps reinforce the information one more time in long term memory. Even if you aren't interested in the "learning" aspect of the class, it is an opportunity to hear what the instructor was looking for in the answers. This can help you on the **NEXT** exam.

Keep in mind that there are things you can do before, during, and after exams that will help you succeed in the class. You may want to read and complete the Test Taking Checklist to evaluate your development as a test-wise student.

## Chapter Six

### PRESENTATION SKILLS

A presentation is a means of communication that can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting or briefing a team. A presentation can also be used as a broad term that encompasses other 'speaking engagements' such as making a speech at a wedding, or getting a point across in a video conference. A presentation requires you to get a message across to the listeners and will often contain a '*persuasive*' element. It may, for example, be a talk about the positive work of your organisation, what you could offer an employer, or why you should receive additional funding for a project.

Presentation skills are the skills you need in delivering effective and engaging presentations to a variety of audiences. These skills cover a variety of areas such as the structure of your presentation, the design of your slides, the tone of your voice and the body language you convey. To be an effective presenter, step-by-step preparation and the method and means of presenting the information should be carefully considered.

#### **Planning your Presentation**

It can be helpful to plan your presentation in terms of key steps, as follows:

- a) Set your objective. A simple sentence can be a good means of defining your purpose in giving the presentation, and will begin to determine the content.

(Objective is a short statement which tells what you plan to achieve. For example, you may plan that)

Try to complete the following sentence:

'As a result of my presentation, my audience will be able to.....

- i) Explain the methods of preventing HIV/AIDS.'
- ii) See their role in interdisciplinary learning more clearly,
- b) Decide what the main purpose of your talk is e.g:-
  - to inform, persuade, motivate or change things.
  - What do you want your audience to do as a result of your talk?
- c) Understand your audience: Try and have a basic idea of the size of the audience and who they are. Think about what they will be expecting from the presentation, but be realistic about this. Find out what level of knowledge and experience those attending will have about your topic, so that you know where to aim the material. Is the audience likely to have any preconceptions or misconceptions about the subject that you need to address and put right?  
How might your audience use what you have to say?
- d) Know your setting: Find out about the equipment -audiovisual aids etc. that will be available. Check out the location of the presentation; the size of the room (to help you decide on type of seating arrangements), and other facilities.
- e) Write down the 'central theme' of the talk.
- f) Write your outline: Ask yourself: What are the main points I need to make to get my message across? What supporting information will I need? Where will I get this? How much time will I need?
- g) Structure your talk.

## **Structuring Your Presentation**

This is one of the most important aspects of the presentation. The structure should be clear to both you and your audience. Develop your visual aids: For example, will you use a flipchart, whiteboard power point, overhead projector or data projector etc. to clarify important points and aid understanding?

**NB: Do not use too many slides/points.**

Prepare your delivery notes, according to the structured outline.

Different authors advocate different formats for structuring a presentation, each of which has their merits (Hartley and Bruckman, 2002; Hargie et al, 2004; Adler and Elmhorst, 1999).

The structure of a presentation should have an *introduction*, body and conclusion.

### **i) Introduction:**

Through the introduction you should grab your audience's attention and set the scene.

Ways of getting your audience's attention include;

- asking a rhetorical or intriguing question,
- providing a relevant and interesting fact,
- giving an anecdote,
- outlining the valuable information you hope the audience will gain from the presentation,
- telling them why they need to know the information,
- giving a quote or making a dramatic prediction.

Your theme should be made clear from the start. Start the audience thinking about the subject matter of your presentation by, for example, a statement of your main



objective. It can also be helpful to present the structure to your talk, by explaining briefly how you plan to proceed with it.

**ii)The Main Body:**

Select the main points that support your argument but only include as much detail as your audience needs. Also, be aware that people will not remember too many points. Once you have decided on the key points, organize them into a sequence that makes sense to you. This sequence may take various forms, including being chronologically based, problem-solution based, simple-complex based etc. (Hargie et al, 2004; Adler and Elmhorst, 1999).

Explain and build your points using supporting information and evidence.

**iii)Conclusion:**

There are various ways of concluding a presentation including

- changing the pace,
- using a new visual aid,
- summarizing your main points,
- drawing the conclusion and its importance,
- making recommendations,
- asking for questions,
- getting feedback,
- asking for or recommending particular actions,
- getting some sort of commitment from the group to the advocated course of action,
- Finally end by thanking the group for their time and attention.

Do not end suddenly. Give your audience some idea that you are coming to a close; eg. 'And now, before I finish' or 'In conclusion' etc.

Try to end on a strong note through the use of tactics detailed above. Research has long since shown that we tend to remember the opening and closing parts of a presentation over the detail in the middle.

## **Delivery**

DeVito (1990) outlines four main types of delivery:

1. **Impromptu:** This involves giving a talk with no prior planning, and is often the least preferred method. Sometimes however, we do not have an opportunity to prepare and are called on to speak at short notice. Take a few moments to write some key points down on a card to help give you some structure, and do not panic. Others will be aware that you had only a short time to prepare. Also keeping the style relaxed and conversational, so that it seems impromptu (even if this is not the case) can be a very effective style.
2. **Extemporaneous:** Extemporaneous speech is a “carefully prepared, but delivered without notes or text.” It is speaking before a group on a topic you are familiar with, using very few notes. Extemporaneous speeches are presentations that must be given without any notes or slides and with minimum preparation time, usually less than 30 minutes. This involves cue cards or slides on which you summarize the main points which you then flesh out.
3. **Memorized:** This approach involves learning and repeating a manuscript. This is more difficult when giving longer presentations in that there is a lot of material to be memorized. However, a useful tip is to memorize the first few lines to get you started.
4. **Reading from a manuscript:** This involves speaking from a prepared manuscript. However, while this can feel the safest option, try to use it as a guide as far as

possible rather than reading it word for word, as your delivery could otherwise sound stilted. Practice and rehearse in order to remember key points. Ultimately, choose the method, or combination of methods, that is least stressful for you.

### **Techniques of Delivery**

Hargie et al (2004, p. 72) outline a number of features of effective deliveries, summarised as follows:

- Use appropriate language and avoid jargon. If the audience do not understand most of what is being talked about, they will become detached.
- Be suitably paced. Inexperienced speakers have a habit of speaking too quickly. On the other hand, speaking too slowly is a recipe for boredom. Where speed of delivery may be a particular concern, think about placing an accomplice in the audience primed to signal when you get too slow or too quick.
- Use visual aids without placing them centre stage. Even the best of these are only aids to assist the speaker.
- Make use of sub-summaries, signposts and links. Pause at transitional points in the flow of ideas to briefly summarize the material covered. Explaining how this 'chunk' of information links with what comes next helps to signpost the path through the presentation and increases its coherence.
- Emphasize key points verbally, non-verbally and vocally. Emphasize verbally through listing key points (e.g. 'It is vital that you recognise...'), repeating core elements etc; non-verbally (e.g. Gestures, changes in posture, position); and vocally (e.g. Altering volume, speed of delivery, tone of voice).

- Be verbally fluent. Effective public speakers do not have to be word perfect. Nevertheless, lots of 'umms' 'ahhhhs' and other fillers such as 'you know' can be highly distracting.
- Be concrete and precise, rather than appearing vague and indefinite.
- Be varied, e.g. intersperse talk with graphs, slides or pieces of video that the audience can look at as a break from listening. If appropriate, encourage some discussion or ask the audience to work on a brief exercise.
- Include carefully chosen examples - as a bridge between what the listener knows and is familiar with and the new material being introduced.
- Avoid distractions, e.g. pacing around, playing with a pen or pointer, over use of certain stock phrases. Gain control of body language.
- Seem natural and not contrived. This can take some time and practice.
- Rehearse what is going to be said.

### **Body Language during presentation**

Remember the importance of non-verbal communication!

- Behave enthusiastically,
- make and maintain eye contact,
- smile,
- act 'as if' you are confident and relaxed (even if you do not feel it) and make your introduction without reading from your notes too much.
- The manner of speech is also important.
- As well as ensuring that your voice can be heard by the furthest member of the group,
- speak clearly and at a conversational,
- appropriate speed.

- Varying the tone, pitch, rate and other vocal features can communicate enthusiasm and can create a sense of interest in the listener.
- Pause before key points and stress key parts of the sentence by using change in tone.

**Techniques to resolve your anxiety include the following:**

1. Accept that it is perfectly normal to feel nervous or anxious to some extent.
2. • Prepare well.
3. • Be realistic. Are your standards too high? Take off the unnecessary pressure that comes from negative and unrealistic thoughts by challenging them and seeking the more rational view. That worst case scenario you imagine is highly improbable, and if a less than positive outcome does occur, it is unlikely to be the end of the world!
4. • Use relaxation exercises such as deep breathing.
5. • Behave 'as if' you are feeling confident; i.e.
  - i. Enter the presentation in a very deliberate way,
  - ii. Rehearse your presentation, but also how you will Stand, set out your notes, change your slides etc,
  - iii. Use other non-verbal behaviors to appear confident.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **NoteTaking**

Effective note-taking from lectures and readings is an essential skill for university study. Good note-taking allows a permanent record for revision and a register of relevant points that you can integrate with your own writing and speaking. Good note-taking reduces the risk of plagiarism. It also helps you distinguish where your ideas came from and how you think about those ideas.

**Note taking** is the practice of writing down pieces of information in a systematic way. Note taking includes the following:

- Taking notes in a lecture or a discussion
- Taking notes in a lecture and processing/annotating/rewriting these notes

Effective note-taking requires:

- recognising the main ideas
- identifying what information is relevant to your task
- having a system of note taking that works for you
- reducing the information to note and diagram format
- where possible, putting the information in your own words
- recording the source of the information

Note making on the other hand is taking notes from reading in some systematic way.

## **THE FIVE R'S OF NOTE TAKING**

Professor Walter Pauk of the Study Center at Cornell University describes five essential aspects of note taking. He characterized these as the five R's of note taking. Here they are:

1. **RECORDING.** Get down the main ideas and facts.
2. **REDUCING.** To reduce is to summarize. Pick out key terms and concepts. You can make from your notes what students sometimes call "bakhra."  
'mwakenya'. These are sheets that list, usually in outline form, the bare

bones of a course. You will use them in reviewing by using the key ideas as cues for reciting the details of what you have in your notes. On each page of notes you take, allow room to write down these cues.

3. **RECITING.** Review lecture notes as soon after the lecture as possible. But you will also want to review your notes before an exam and from time to time during the semester to keep them fresh in your mind. Do so in your own words. That way you will know that you understand.
4. **REFLECTING.** Something that many students don't grasp is that ideas from college courses are meant to be thought about. It is easy to fall into the trap of reciting ideas by rote. One of the main purposes of a college education is to help you think. Then too, if you reflect about what you are learning, you won't be surprised when ideas turn up on examinations in an unexpected form.
5. **REVIEWING.** One of the real secrets of successful studying is being sure when, how, and what to review. But however you do it, reviewing is essential. Even the accomplished performer--the pianist or the stage performer knows that a review, no matter how well he or she may know the material, is essential to a professional performance.

### **Steps Towards Effective Note taking**

To take efficient notes that you can use later require that you:

1. Use full-sized 8 1/2"x11" paper. Do not use a small note tablet. You will be using the margin space provided by the full-sized paper. In addition, on a single page of full-sized paper you will often see ideas or

groups of related ideas that might not be so easily seen when spread over several small pages;

2. Use a ballpoint pen. This is in order to write quickly -- something that can't be done as well with a pencil or a felt-tip pen. Don't worry about mistakes with a pen that makes marks you can't erase. Just cross out the mistakes!;
3. Keep all the notes from each course together in a separate section of a notebook. Use either a loose leaf binder with separate sections, or a large spiral notebook that has several sections. The loose leaf binder, however, allows you to insert course handouts and related materials;
4. Date each day's notes and try to title the notes for each lecture;
5. Take notes on one side of the page only, leaving space at the top and on the left-hand margin. Using only one side eliminates the bother, when you are studying, of having to flip pages over and then flip them back to follow the development of an idea or discussion. Leaving wide margins gives you space to add to your notes later, should you so desire;
6. Write legibly. When you prepare for a test you want to spend the time studying -- not trying to decipher your own handwriting;
7. To save time when note-taking, abbreviate recurring terms. Place a key for these abbreviate terms in the top margin of your notes. For example, in a biology class ch could stand for chromosome ; in a sociology class o c could stand for operant conditioning . When the lecture is over, you may want to go back and fill in the words you have



abbreviated (again, for easier reading when preparing for examinations).

8. **Sit Where You'll Be Seen.** There is a saying common among teachers that; the further in back of the class that a student sits, the lower that student's grade. Students who sit in the back of the classroom, starting on that first day of classes, those students who sit near the door, typically represent the students who will have a difficult time following lectures, whose minds are not so much on the class as it is getting through the day, who will present the most problems in terms of attendance.
- **Make Systematic Notes.**  
When taking notes, you want to do so in an organized, systematic fashion. There is no "magic" to the student who takes good notes, the student who, at the end of the semester, is in a position to review effectively and efficiently for examinations and papers based upon the strength of their notes. They have developed a note-taking system, and have learned to stay with it.
- **Use an Outline for Your Notes.**  
Try to write down your notes in the following outline form. Start main points at the margin. Indent secondary ideas and supporting details. Further indent material that is subordinate to those secondary points. Main points are listed at the margin. Secondary points and supporting details are indented. Material that is subordinate to secondary points is indented further.

Still another organizational aid: when the speaker shifts from one idea to another, show this shift in concern by skipping a line or two, leaving a clearly visible space.

- **Be Alert for Signals of Importance.**

As you can see, good listening and note-taking are special skills. When following lectures, for example, you want to be alert to the "signals" that lecturers give to indicate that certain material is important, that help you in further organizing your notes for later study and review. There are five such signals:

1. Write down whatever your teacher puts on the blackboard..
2. Always write down definitions and enumerations. Most people instinctively will write down definitions - explanations of key terms in the subject being studied. But people often forget or ignore enumerations, which are often just as important. An enumeration is simply a list of items (marked 1,2,3 or with other symbols) that fit under a particular heading. Teachers often use enumerations, or lists, to show the relationship among a group of ideas. They are signaled in such ways as:
3. Your instructor might say, "This is an important concept..."; or "One point that will repeat itself in the material..."; or "The primary cause was...."; or "Pay special attention to..."; or "The basic idea here is..."; or "The thesis being advanced is..."; and so forth. You want to make sure to write down important statements announced by these and other emphasis words, and mark imp or some other mark of your own

choosing (one that you can quickly and easily make out) to show their importance;

4. If the lecturer repeats a point, you can usually assume that it is important or relevant. You might even write R in the margin to indicate that it was repeated in order to know that the instructor stressed the idea in class; and finally,
5. A lecturer's voice may slowdown, become louder, or otherwise signal that you are to write down exactly what is being said, word for word. When this happens, do it!

#### Write Down Examples.

This is so obvious that people sometimes forget to do it, or take it for granted and then forget to do so. Write down any examples the teacher might provide during the course of a lecture, and then mark them with ex. These examples help you understand complex, abstract forms and concepts. If you don't mark them with ex, then you are likely to forget their purpose when you later review them for study. You do not have to write down every single example, but you should do at least one to help clarify the point(s) being made.

#### Write Down Details That Connect or Explain.

Always write down the details that connect or explain main points. Too many students copy only the major points the teachers puts on the blackboard. These students don't understand that as time passes during the semester, they may (and will) forget the specifics that serve as connecting bridges between ideas. Make certain, then, to record the connecting details that the instructor provides. When you do, you are much more likely to remember and recall those relationships among the major points in your notes.

### Leave Some Blank Spaces.

Leave some blank spaces for those ideas or items you miss. Immediately after class, ask another student to help you fill in the blank spaces. A good idea during the first week of class is to identify someone in the class you can work with. Ask Questions.

In a word, get involved with the subject matter and the instructor. Don't hesitate to ask questions if certain points are confusing to you. Draw the line, however, at asking too many questions, or asking questions simply to be heard. Most instructors frown on this type of behavior from students. But keep in mind when asking serious, relevant questions that other students in the class probably have the same questions in mind but are reluctant to ask them. Teachers do look favorably upon students who show interest and curiosity in the subject.

### Take Notes during Discussions.

Most students miss out on this most valuable of opportunities. They somehow perceive it in their minds as a sort of "time out" from class. The point is that you do not want to stop taking notes during discussion periods. There are lots of invaluable ideas that can and do come up during informal sessions, ideas that your instructor may not present later on. If your instructor puts notes on the board during a discussion period, you can take that as a good sign that the material is important. If the instructor pursues a point brought up during the discussion or takes the class in a certain direction based upon a point brought up during the discussion, then that is a strong bit of evidence that you should be taking notes. And always keep in mind the note from the first step: when in doubt, write it down.

### Take Notes Right Up to the End of Class.

Nothing is more irritating to an instructor than to see students start putting away

their notebooks and pens when there are 3-4 minutes left in the class. It is as though the student is saying that nothing important will be said at the end. Keep in mind that very often, because of time spent on discussions, teachers may have critical points they want to cover in those closing minutes of class and they will use that time to cram in that last bit of information which might just be the summary for the entire period. Be ready to write as rapidly as you can to get down this final rush of ideas.

#### **Review Your Notes Soon.**

Go over your notes soon after class. While the material is still fresh in your mind, make your notes as clear as possible. A day later may be too late because forgetting sets in almost at once. The best time to start studying your notes is within a day after taking them. Because of the mind's tendency to forget material rapidly, a few minutes at aside for study soon after class will give you more learning for less time and effort than almost any other technique you can practice.

#### **After taking notes:**

- Maintain a written record.
- Try to Do Advance Reading (Preview) of the notes before the next lesson.

#### **How to Review your notes**

Now that you have developed your notes, you need to go over how to study class notes. The following is one effective way to do so:

- a. Use the margin at the side or top of each page. Jot down in the margin a series of key words or phrases from your notes. These key

words or phrases, known as recall words , will help you in pulling together and remembering the important ideas on the page;

- b. To test yourself on the material, turn those recall words in the margin into questions. For instance, you might ask yourself, "What are recall words?" If you follow this approach on a regular basis, it will certainly help you remember the material covered in your classes. By using this method, you will not be left with a great deal of material to organize and learn right before an exam. Instead, you will be able to devote quality time before that examination to a final intensive review of the subject matter.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Writing Skills**

*We learn to read by reading, and*

*We learn to write by writing.*

*But*

*We also learn to read by writing, and*

*We learn to write by reading.*

What is writing?

Writing is:

- A process of putting thought ,ideas and concepts into words using continuous prose;

- A thinking process;
- a form of output/production because it is a demonstration of what we know, implicitly or explicitly
- Opportunity for negotiation of meaning through peer interaction - at every stage of the writing process
- a means of building fluency;
- a way of developing accuracy (in grammar, vocabulary, etc.);
- thinking made evident external memory;
- a critical skill for academic or professional success
- is a way to demonstrate proficiency
- helps us discover what we do or do not know
- is more than a paragraph or essay

### **What are writing Skills**

- Ability to put sounds down on graphic form according to the conventional sound-spelling rules.
- Ability to spell English words correctly, including using correct punctuation and capitalization.
- Ability to do writing practice, such as dictation, grammar exercises, constructing dialogues according to the model, simple translation exercises.
- Ability to write short compositions, including functional writing skills, such as writing simple letters, taking notes, writing outlines and summaries.

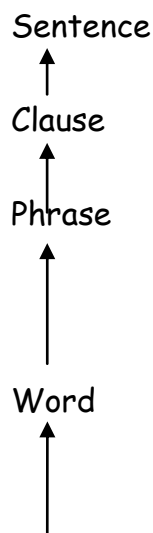
### **What a good writing entails**

Any writing assignment needs to have:

- Form (letter, email, summary, report, etc.)
- Audience
- Topic
- Purpose (describe, explain, persuade, etc.)
- Clear
- Grammatically correct
- Have variety
- Precise
- Interesting pace
- Not be emotional
- Appropriate: language and audience
- Supported by evidence

## **Grammar**

To be a good writer, one must be conversant with the grammar surrounding the sentence. This is because writing begins at the sentence level because it is a combination of sentences in a meaningful way. We will begin by outlining/ drawing the hierarchical Scale of English Grammar as follows:





## Sounds

Sounds are the smallest units in grammar. They combine to make words, words combine to make phrases, phrases join to make clauses and clauses make sentences. A sentence is the largest unit in English Grammar.

### Types of Sentences

Sentences can be categorized based on their structure or based on their function.

Sentence category based on structure include:

1. Simple sentences

Made up of one main clause

For example:

*Mary is going to school.*

2. Double sentence

Made up of a main clause and a subordinate clause

For example:

*Mary is going to while John is staying at home.*

3. Multiple sentence

Made up of a main clause and two or more subordinate clauses

For example



*Mary is going to while John is staying at home and yet they are both sick.*

Sentences can be categorized based on their function to include:

1. Declarative statements

Sentences which state things the way they are. They talk about the state of things which are usually true.

For Example

- *The sky is blue.*
- *Yambio is a peaceful state*

2. Interrogative Sentences/ questions

These are those statements which are used to ask questions

For example

- *What color is the sky?*
- *Is Yambio a peaceful county?*

3. Exclamative sentences

They express emotions

For example

- *Wow! The sky is blue.*
- *What a peaceful county Yambio is*

4. Imperative sentences/Commands

These are commands

For example

- *Shut up!*
- *Sit down!*

A good writer must be able to use variety of sentences in any piece of essay.  
Variety gives a piece of writing a fast pace and makes it interesting to read.

### **Sentence Pattern**

English Language has the following sentence patterns

1. S+V+O

John   kicked   the ball

S       V       O

A sentence with a subject, verb and one object.

When a verb is followed by one object then the verb is referred to as a  
TRANSITIVE VERB.

2. S+V

The baby   slept

S           V

A sentence which has a subject and a verb

When a verb is not followed by an object then the verb is called  
**INTRASITIVE VERB**

3. S+V+O+O

4. S+V+O+O

For example

- *Mary gave the children sweets*
- *Mary gave sweets to the children*

When a verb is followed by two objects then the verb is called a **DI TRANSITIVE VERB**

5. S+V+C

For example

John    is    King

S        V    O

A sentence where the verb is followed by a complement. The complement tells us more about the noun.

The verb in such a sentence is called a **LINKING VERB**

6. S+V+O+A

An adverbial is that part of the sentence which adds extra information to the sentence. If the adverbial is left out the sentence would still make grammatical sense.

For Example

John    went    to the market    in the morning.

S            V            O                            A

## Types of Essays

An essay is a written composition of moderate length, exploring a particular issue or subject.

There are 4 types of essays in writing namely:

1. Narrative: Giving an account of events. It is mainly used in Fiction, creative writing, history and literature review.
2. Descriptive: Describe people, events, places, things e.g. history
3. Expository/Explanatory: This is advanced descriptive writing that describes events and people in depth. It involves defining explain and expounding on an idea
4. Argumentative/ persuasive also called Academic writing

### 1. Narrative

Narrative writing involves recounting events in an orderly manner. Narratives are mainly fictions or creative writing. Narratives are mainly used in Literature, history and writing stories. They may recount:

- (a) a series of events; a report
- (b) biography or autobiography
- (c) historical events

Narrative writing is imaginative and subjective or factual and objective.

## **2. Descriptive writing**

This is writing that is used to describe a person, a place or a thing or event. There are different types of descriptive writing e.g.

- Static description describes something that is still/not moving
- Cause and Effect describes how one thing causes the effect of another

Descriptive writing can be either objective or subjective in content. A description of something contains full factual and quantifiable information about it. Such information may be personal, touching or sensory impressions and feelings.

Descriptive writing is a domain of arts and history.

## **3. Expository/Explanatory writing**

This is advanced description and focuses on explaining, defining and expounding on an idea. Such writing explains and analyses:

- (a) a process
- (b) an opinion or point of view
- (c) event(s) and phenomena
- (d) instructions and directions

## **4. Argumentative Essays**

Argumentative writing is an academic writing which is also called persuasive writing. **It is a rational effort to defend or refute a claim and does not have place for emotions, or anger. Most academic writing falls under this category.**

Argumentative writing is done argumentatively. The writer collects all his/her points and presents them logically and constructively. The aim of an argumentative writing is to persuade the audience and convince them to accept the writers point of view. Argumentative essays are expected to be clear and coherent. The writer must be clear about his/her argument.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**

1. Clarity
2. Complete
3. Accurate
4. Based on sound premises
5. Logical Avoid arguing in circles
6. Reasonable
7. Be based on evidence
8. Must acknowledge opposition
9. Avoid fallacies i.e. unqualified generalizations

### **The process of writing**

1. Planning

Involves gathering ideas and focusing on the topic: Topic selection, gathering ideas, extensive reading and interpretation. When planning one must ask himself/herself the following questions:

- What is the purpose of my writing?
- Who is my audience?
- What are the special requirements of my writing task?

## 2. Shaping

Considering how best to organize your ideas on pen and paper. Shaping involves:

- Determining the tone
- Drafting a thesis statement
- Outlining ideas

## 3. Drafting

## 4. Revising

## 5. Editing

## 6. Proof reading

## Paragraphs

A paragraph is a group of sentences that work together in unity to explain an idea.

A **paragraph** is a group of sentences that work to develop a unit of thought.

A paragraph is a selection of sentence which is related because they are all talking about the same thing, or are dealing with a single topic.



Paragraphing permits you to subdivide material into parts and arrange those parts into a unified whole that effectively communicates its message.

**Paragraphs can be classified as:**

### **1. Topical**

A topical paragraph is basically a paragraph made up of a group of sentences arranged around one main idea, or one topic. This is the type of paragraph you are most familiar with. Topical paragraphs are probably the only type most student think of as a paragraph. They are also called developmental paragraphs or body paragraphs. They are usually found after the introductory paragraph and before the concluding paragraph. Topical paragraphs consist of a statement of a main idea and specific, logical support for that main idea.

#### **Characteristics of a topical Paragraph**

i) Must have a topic sentence which should appear early in the first few lines of the paragraph preferably the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> line. The topic sentence tells you what the paragraph is about. Because there's only one topic developed in each paragraph, there should only ever be one topic sentence. The topic sentence of a paragraph is developed, or built on, by the addition of supporting information and details.

ii) Unity

iii) Coherence

iv) Grammatical

v) Order (Direction of Movement)

### **2. Special: Introductory, concluding and transitory**

## **Introductions**

Introductions or introductory paragraphs perform very important functions. First, they must attract the reader, influencing him/her to read the remainder of the essay. Second, they must not only introduce readers to the essay topic but they must also limit that topic and identify the writer's attitude toward the topic. Finally, they must provide readers with information regarding what is to be expected within the remainder of the essay.

Every paper you write should have a main point, a main idea, or central message. The argument(s) you make in your paper should reflect this main idea. The sentence that captures your position on this main idea is what we call a thesis statement. The thesis statement comes in the introductory paragraph and must be concise and well-written.

A thesis statement must come early in your essay, e.g. in the introduction. This will enable your reader to:

- Establish your position and
- Give your reader a sense of direction.

Your thesis statement should be

- clear
- specific
- Short
- In line with your argument
- Must indicate your position

### **Types of introduction Paragraphs**

1. The introduction must be a road map for the rest of your essay
2. Anecdotal
3. Regular Triangular
4. Inverted Triangle
5. Summary
6. A wise word
7. Provoking question
8. Corrective introduction
9. Historical Review

### **Concluding Paragraph**

This should be the last paragraph in the essay. Its purpose is to bring the essay to a graceful end. The concluding paragraph gives the writer one final chance to leave a lasting impression on the reader.

### **Ways of writing a concluding paragraph:**

- A brief summary of the paper's main points.
- Restate the main idea of your essay, or your thesis statement
- A provocative question.
- A quotation.
- Evoke a vivid image.
- Call for some sort of action.
- End with a warning.
- Universalize (compare to other situations).

- Suggest results or consequences.

It is important to have a strong conclusion, since this is the last chance you have to make an impression on your reader. The goal of your conclusion isn't to introduce any new ideas, but to sum up everything you've written. Specifically, your conclusion should accomplish three major goals:

### **Transitional paragraph**

The transitional paragraph marks a transition in the paper from one section to another, or from one thought to another, one sub-topic to another. It indicates to the reader either that there will be a change in idea or topic or that there will be a movement from a broad topic to a specific one. These types of paragraphs usually are small and consist of one double or multiple sentences which begins with a connector or a gerundive.

### **Example**

*Having explained the general importance of education, this research is now going to discuss the importance of education as the fourth pillar in humanitarian aid.*

A transitional paragraph tends to be a short paragraph in an essay that announces a shift from one section or idea to another. A transitional paragraph is most commonly used to summarize the ideas of one part of a text in preparation for the beginning of another part.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Library Skills**

**Definition of library:**

A library is an organized collection of books and other literary material kept for reading, study and consultation.

A Library is a collection or group of collections of books and other materials maintained for reading, study and research, organized to facilitate access by a specific clientele and staffed by librarians and other staff, trained to meet the needs of its users.

A University student is expected to read study and research in the library. A good student visits the library often and knows how to access books in the library.

A good student must be information literate. The American Library Association (ALA) presidential Committee on Information Literacy Final Report (1989) states as follows:

“To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information”. To realize this goal, it requires a structuring of the learning process so that students are taught problem solving techniques for life-long learning. Information literacy in institutions of higher learning is necessary for both students and staff. The goal of information literacy is to ensure that users are equipped and encouraged to learn from the range of information resources available. It includes learning to use both formal and informal information resources.

According to Bruce (1994) information literacy involves the following:

- Understanding the nature of information society;  
Acquiring values which promoted information access to use.

- Being able to implement the process of identifying an information need locating, retrieving, evaluating and synthesizing the information required;
- Developing a high level of communication skills, including the ability to communicate with colleagues and information professionals;
- Developing a sound knowledge of network sources and strategies for using them; and
- Developing the ability to manage the information retrieval through the appropriate use of, for example word processors, spreadsheet, and bibliographic management software.

### **Role of information**

When well organized and disseminated information can be effective in the following areas:

- Facilitate planning, decision-making and problem solving.  
Enhancing social economic cultural scientific and technological development.
- Enable the development of the national economy.  
Promotion of recreation and leisure.
- Develop a cohesive nation of intelligent people

In Academia, information is required to:

- Facilitate research, study and teaching; and
- Enable success in studies, assignments and the passing of examinations.

### **Types of information resources**

Information resources

These are materials that are used as resources of information for reference,

research, study and recreation.

Information resources are found in form of books, newspapers, computer disks/tapes, listening (radio), viewing (TV), and speaking (oral).

## **Books**

UNESCO defines a book as a non periodical literary publication consisting of 49 or more pages, covers not included.

A collection of leaves of paper or other material, written or printed, fastened together in some manner with a cover.

In the USA for a publication to be called a book it must consist of 24 or more pages.

## **Newspapers**

These are serial publications usually printed on newsprint and issues daily, semi weekly or weekly containing news, editorial opinion, regular columns, letters to the editor, cartoons, advertisements and other items of current, often local interest to a general readership.

## **Periodicals**

These are publications with distinctive titles containing articles, stories or other short works usually written by different contributors, issued in soft cover more than once, usually at stated intervals.

Periodicals are published by scholarly societies, University presses, government agencies, commercial publishing houses, private corporations, trade and professional associations and other organizations.

## **Journals**

These are periodicals devoted to disseminating current research and commentary on developments within a specific discipline sub discipline or field of study usually published in quarterly or bimonthly issues which Libraries bind into continuously paginated volumes.

Most journal articles are longer than five pages and include a bibliography or a list of works cited at the end.

Journal articles in science and social sciences usually include an abstract preceding the text, which summarizes the content.

## **Magazines**

These are popular periodicals containing articles on various topics written by different authors. Most magazine are heavily illustrated containing advertisements and are printed on glossy paper. Articles are usually short (less than five pages) unsigned and do not include a bibliography or list of references. Most magazines are issued monthly or weekly.

## **Abstracts**

An abstract is a short statement of essential content of a book, article, speech, report and dissertation. It gives the main points in the same order as the original work.

## **Index**

An index is a list of terminologies arranged alphabetically in the last pages of a book. It has page numbers which direct the reader to the specific page of a text on which the desired information can be found.



### **Archival Sources**

This is an organized collection of noncurrent records of an institution, government, organization or corporate body. Archival sources are managed and maintained by a librarian with special training known as an archivist.

### **Serial Publications**

A publication in any format issued in successively numbered or dated parts or issues, appearing at regular or irregular intervals and intended to be continued indefinitely. In our library the serial or periodical catalogue is known as a Kardex.

### **Patents**

A patent is an official document issued by the government in response to a formal application process in which the applicant (usually the inventor) is granted the exclusive right to manufacture, use, and sell an invention for a specified number of years the document is assigned a patent number by the patent office for future reference.

### **Standards**

Standards are any criteria established by law, agreement, or custom, according to which values, quantities, procedure performance, etc are measured or evaluated and to which manufacturers, practitioners, researchers, etc seek to conform in order to ensure quality and uniformity of results.

### **Audio- Visual Materials**

This is a term used to describe non print materials such as films, film strips, slides, video recordings, audio recordings, CD-ROMS, machine readable data files and computer soft ware.

## **Computerized Sources**

**CD-ROM** Compact Disk Read Only Memory.

It is a small plastics optical disk 4.72 inches or 12 centimeters in diameter similar to an audio compact disk. It is used for storing information in digital format. Once information is stored it can be searched and displayed on a computer screen.

Information stored in a CD-ROM can not be changed or erased.

## **Online information resources**

These are information resources accessed through the internet.

In libraries we have the Online Public Access Catalogue. It consists of bibliographic records in machine readable format. These records can be accessed from different computers through the library website.

## **The Internet**

This is a network which inter connects computers of all types through out the world. It enables users to communicate via email, transfer of data and program files. The internet also enables users to find information on the World Wide Web and access computer systems such as catalogues and electronic databases.

## **The Catalogue an important part of the library:**

### **A Definition**

A Catalogue is a list of books periodicals, maps or materials in a specific collection, arranged in a definite order usually alphabetically, by author, title or subject.

The purposes of a library Catalogue are:

To enable a person to find any intellectual creation whether issued in print or non print, when one of the following is known;

- The Author
- The Title
- The Subject
- To show what the library has
- By a given Author
- On a given and related subjects
- In a given kind of literature
- To assist in the choice of a book:
- As to the edition
- As to it's character ( Literary or character)

### **Classification of Books in the Library are classified**

The **Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)**, or **Dewey Decimal System**, is a method of books classification used in libraries. It was first published in the United States in 1876 by Melvil Dewey, and has been revised and expanded through 23 major editions, the latest issued in 2011. DCC is a system made up of ten classes, each divided into ten divisions, each having ten sections. For example, class 600 ("Technology") includes division 630 ("Agriculture and related technologies"), which includes section 636 ("Animal husbandry"). Practically, there are only 99 of 100 divisions and 908 of 1000 sections in total, as some are no longer in use or have not been assigned.

The Decimal Classification introduced the concepts of *relative location* and *relative index* which allow new books to be added to a library in their appropriate location based on subject. Libraries previously had given books permanent shelf locations that were related to the order of acquisition rather than topic. The

classification's notation makes use of three-digit Arabic numerals for main classes, with fractional decimals allowing expansion for further detail. A library assigns a classification number that unambiguously locates a particular volume in a position relative to other books in the library, on the basis of its subject. The number makes it possible to find any book and to return it to its proper place on the library shelves the classification system is used in 200,000 libraries in at least 135 countries.

### **List of Dewey Classes**

- 000 - General works, Computer science and Information
- 100- Philosophy and psychology
- 200- Religion
- 300- Social sciences
- 400- Language
- 500 - Pure Science
- 600- Technology
- 700- Arts & recreation
- 800- Literature
- 900- History & geography

### **Library of Congress Classification**

The **Library of Congress Classification (LCC)** is a system of library classification developed by the library of congress. It is used by most research and academic libraries in the U.S. and several other countries. The classification was invented by Herbert Putnam in 1897, just before he assumed the librarianship of Congress. LCC has been criticized for lacking a sound theoretical basis; many of the classification decisions were driven by the practical needs of that library. Although it divides subjects into broad categories, it is essentially enumerative in nature. That is, it

provides a guide to the books actually in one library's collections, not a classification of the world.

### **LCC Classification**

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Subject area</b>
A	General Works
B	Philosophy, Psychology and Religion
C	Auxiliary sciences of History
D	General and old world History
E & F	History of America, British, French
G	Geography, Anthropology and Recreation
H	Social Sciences
J	Political Sciences
K	Law
L	Education
M	Music
N	Fine Arts
P	Language and Literature
Q	Science
R	Medicine
S	Agriculture
T	Technology
U	Military Science
V	Noval Science
Z	General Information

### **Chapter Ten**

#### **Documentation**

**What are documentation styles?**

A documentation style is a standard approach to the citation of sources that the author of a paper has consulted, abstracted, or quoted from. It prescribes methods for citing references within the text, providing a list of works cited at the end of the paper, and even formatting headings and margins. Using sources in your research paper is an important part of building and supporting your argument.

Different academic disciplines use different documentation styles. It is important to note that different disciplines use different documentation styles. However the most commonly used documentation style by most universities is called the American Psychological Association (APA) The mechanics of citing are complicated, and vary in each format. Amoud University uses APA but does not restrict its usage to disciplines where APA is not applicable.

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- University of Chicago Press (Chicago Manual of Style)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Council of Science Editors (CSE)
- American Chemical Society (ACS)

## **What is Citation**

A citation is both a signpost and an acknowledgement. As a signpost, it signals the location of your source (Source is the book or internet site or journal you have gotten your information from). As an acknowledgement, citing reveals that you are indebted to that source.

A citation can appear in different formats: within the text (in-text citation) at the bottom of the page (footnotes), or at the end of the paper (endnotes).

**We cite when we have used other peoples works in our essay.**

**Why cite**

### **Reasons Why Citation is Important**

Citation is important because it is the basis of academics, that is, the pursuit of knowledge. In the academic endeavour, individuals look at evidence and reason about that evidence in their own individual ways. That is, taking what is already known, established, or thought, they use their reasoning power to create new knowledge. In creating this knowledge, they must cite their sources accurately for three main reasons:

#### **Reason One: Because ideas are the currency of academia**

Citing sources is important because the core of academia is ideas. Citing enables us to credit other writers for their contributions. When a writer cites ideas, that writer honors those who initiated the ideas.

#### **Reason Two: Because failing to cite is considered as plagiarism (Academic stealing)**

Using someone else's idea without giving credit, violates that person's ownership of the idea. To understand this violation, envision the following scenario: You and your friend are discussing some ideas from class during lunch one day, and you make what you consider to be a particularly insightful observation. During class discussion that afternoon, your friend brings up your observation but neglects to point out that it is yours, not his. The professor compliments your friend on his clear and insightful thinking.

You likely to feel that there's something unfair about your friend's claim that your idea was his or her own.

That sense of violation you feel, the sense that something valuable has been stolen from you, suggests why failure to cite sources hurts another person.

**Reason Three: Because academics need to be able to trace the genealogy of ideas.**

### **How to cite**

According to APA style, there are two ways to communicate to your reader that you've used others' work:

1. In your text, you need to show that you've paraphrased or directly quoted someone else.
2. At the very end of your paper, you need to provide a list of all the articles, chapters, books, and websites that you've used within the body of your text.

### **When to Cite**

- In-Text: within the text
- When paraphrasing someone else.

When you paraphrase someone else, you're putting someone else's work in your own words. To make that happen, you need to select only the most important information and do one or both of the following:

- Completely change the original wording.
- Completely change the order of the ideas and words.

It is important to paraphrase because it shows your readers that you can extract an author's ideas into a tight, compact sentence. While it does require more effort than directly quoting an author, it is an important skill that you have to demonstrate when you're writing an academic paper.



To signal to your reader that you have paraphrased an author, you need to indicate the author and the year that the article/ chapter/book/website was published.

- Directly quoting someone else

When you directly quote someone else, you need to keep all or almost all of the original wording intact. Directly quoting others' work is effective, especially when the original wording is powerful or when there is no way for you to reasonably paraphrase the original wording.

To signal to your reader that you have directly quoted someone, you need to use quotation marks around the quoted words and you need to indicate the author, the year that the article/chapter/book/website was published, and the page number or URL where the quotation can be found.

#### **How to use direct quotation**

1. Use active voice, the use of the personal pronoun “I” instead of “this researcher” is acceptable. The use of “he” or “she” when presenting the work of other authors is discouraged.
2. Block quotations should be single spaced, not double spaced, and should be indented on the left (only) by 1/2 inch

#### **APA GUIDELINES**

- a. Page margins are to be one inch for the top, bottom, and right side. The left margin is 1.5” in your thesis.
- b. Start page numbering on the first page of text (not the title page), with it and each subsequent page (including the reference list)



numbered at the top right margin;

- c. Any tables or figures should be inserted into text, close to the place cited (but where they are not broken by a page break) if possible.
- d. Reference lists should be single spaced, with double spacing between citations and arranged alphabetically

### **Citation and Referencing**

#### **One Author**

Williams, J. H. (2008). Employee engagement: Improving participation in safety. *Professional Safety*, 53(12), 40-45.

#### **Two to Seven Authors [List all authors]**

Keller, T. E., Cusick, G. R., & Courtney, M. E. (2007). Approaching the transition to adulthood: Distinctive profiles of adolescents aging out of the child welfare system. *Social Services Review*, 81, 453-484.

#### **Eight or More Authors [List the first six authors, ... and the last author]**

Wolchik, S. A., West, S. G., Sandler, I. N., Tein, J.-Y., Coatsworth, D., Lengua, L.,...Griffin, W. A. (2000). An experimental evaluation of theory-based mother and mother-child programs for children of divorce. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 843- 856.

#### **Magazine Article**

Mathews, J., Berrett, D., & Brillman, D. (2005, May 16). Other winning equations. *Newsweek*, 145(20), 58-59.

## **BOOKS, CHAPTERS IN BOOKS, REPORTS.**

### **General Form**

**Author, A. A. (Year). Title of work. Location: Publisher.**

### **One Author**

Alexie, S. (1992). The business of fancydancing: Stories and poems.  
Brooklyn, NY: Hang Loose Press.

### **Corporate Author with an Edition and Published by the Corporate Author**

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). Diagnostic and statistical manual of  
mental disorders (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Anonymous Author**

Dorland's illustrated medical dictionary (31st ed.). (2007). Philadelphia,  
PA: Saunders.

### **Chapter in a Book**

Booth-LaForce, C., & Kerns, K. A. (2009). Child-parent attachment relationships,  
peer relationships, and peer-group functioning. In K. H. Rubin, W. M. Bukowski, & B.  
Laursen (Eds.), Handbook of peer interactions, relationships, and groups (pp. 490-  
507). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

## **ONLINE JOURNALS, MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS**

### **General Format - Databases**

**Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article.**

**Name of Journal, xx, xxx-xxx. doi:xxxxxxxxxx**

**Article Retrieved from an Online Database**

**NOTE: Use the article's DOI (Digital Object Identifier), the unique code given by the publisher to a specific article.**

Senior, B., & Swales, S. (2007). Inside management teams: Developing a teamwork survey instrument. *British Journal of Management*, 18, 138-153. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8551.2006.00507.x

**NOTE: Use the journal's home page URL (or web address) if there is no DOI.**

### **OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES**

#### **General Form**

**Author, A. A. (Year). Title of work. Retrieved from web address**

**Online Report from a Nongovernmental Organization**

Kenney, G. M., Cook, A., & Pelletier, J. (2009). Prospects for reducing uninsured rates among children: How much can premium assistance programs help? Retrieved from Urban Institute website: [http:// www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411823](http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411823)

**Online Report with No Author Identified and No Date**

GVU's 10th WWW user survey. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://www.cc.gatech.edu/user\\_surveys/survey-1998-10/](http://www.cc.gatech.edu/user_surveys/survey-1998-10/)

**Web Sites in Parenthetical Citations:** To cite an entire Web site (but not a specific document within the site), it is sufficient to give the URL of the site in the text.

## REFERENCE CITATIONS IN TEXT

APA utilizes a system of brief referencing in the text of a paper, whether one is paraphrasing or providing a direct quotation from another author's work.

Citations in the text usually consist of the name of the author(s) and the year of publication. The page number is added when utilizing a direct quotation.

## CITING SECONDARY SOURCES

When citing in the text a work discussed in a secondary source, give both the primary and the secondary sources. In the example below, the study by Seidenberg and McClelland were mentioned in an article by Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller.

Seidenberg and McClelland's study (as cited in Coltheart, Curtis, Atkins, & Haller, 1993) provided a glimpse into the world

In the references page, you would cite only the secondary source you read not the original study.

Coltheart, M., Curtis, B., Atkins, P., & Haller, M. (1993). Models of reading aloud: Dual-route and parallel-distributed processing approaches. *Psychological Review*, 100, 589-608.

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **Functional Writing**

Functional writing is writing that is geared towards a student's academic and professional life. It is writing that equips a student with the necessary skills to write documents required in both academic and professional life such as: Formal correspondence; official letters, emails, memos, reports, curriculum vitae (CV), Business plans among others.

#### **Formal letters**

Formal letters are also called official or business letters and they fulfill official functions, such as applying for a job, apologizing to the headmaster, asking for permission to be away, applying for a place as a pupil, etc. it is important for us to train our learners to write as many types of formal letters as possible. Note the following characteristics of formal letters.

1. The address of the writer is on the right hand-top-corner.
2. The date of writing is one line below the writer's address.
3. On the left-hand side, beginning on the line below the date is found on at least three lines:
  - a) The position (title) of the person to whom the letter is written (e.g. manager, president, headteacher) followed by their name.
  - b) The place where he/she is working.
  - c) The addressee's address.

4. The way addressees are greeted (addressed), called the salutation, is written two lines below the address, below the addressee's address, e.g.

- "Dear Sir,
- "Dear Madam,"
- "Dear Mr .... ,"
- "Dear Mrs ...."

5. The subject of the letter is written two lines below the salutation, following REF: which is in the left margin. The subject is written in capital letters and is underlined. It summarises the purposes of the letter.

6. The main body of the letter follows. Notice how it is begun, the details of information given and the language of the letter.

7. The complimentary close is a polite, formal expression that is written before the writer's signature: e.g.

- Sincerely.
- Your Faithfully

8. Sometimes the writer may have to pass the letter through someone else for approval. For example:

- i) . A pupil through his/her head of school
- ii) . A secretary of a school club through the teacher in charge of that club (patron)
- iii) . A primary school teacher through his/her DEO.

In this case, "through" comes immediately below and a line after the addressee's address and is written

THRU.

That is, between parts 3 and 4 above.

## Curriculum Vitae

### What is a CV?

CV stands for curriculum vitae, which is Latin for 'course of life'. It is a summary of your experience, skills and education.

In the USA and Canada it is known as a résumé - this is the French word for summary.

A Curriculum Vitae is a self-marketing tool and getting an interview can depend on how good your CV is. Your CV is your chance to show an employer you have the skills and experience needed, and that you are the right person for the job. However, the way you present your CV can have an overwhelming influence over whether your CV is even read, let alone get you that all important interview. You will need to consider what to include, how much detail is needed and how to make your CV stand out from all the others.

### What to include in your CV

- **Construct your CV with your prospective employer in mind.** Look at the job advert or specification and think about what the job involves, and what the employer needs. Find out about the main activities of the employer.
- **Tailor your CV to the job.** Your CV shouldn't be your life story but should be tailored for the job you're applying for, focusing on the parts that are important for that particular job.



- **Make your CV clear, neat and tidy.** Get somebody to check your spelling and grammar. No-one wants to read a CV that is squashed together and includes too much information. Your CV should be easy to read with space between each section and plenty of white space. Use left-justified text as it's easiest to read, using black text on good quality white or cream paper.
- **View your experience in a positive light.** Try to look objectively at your experiences (even the bad ones) and identify what you learned or what skills you developed in the process. This is the picture you should present to the employer.
- **Place the important information up-front.** Put experience and education achievements in reverse chronological order.
- Include experience and interests that might be of use to the employer: IT skills, voluntary work, foreign language competency, driving skills, leisure interests that demonstrate team skills and organization/leadership skills.
- **Put your name and email address on every page** - in case the pages of your CV get separated.
- **Use positive language.** when describing your work achievements use power words such as 'launched', 'managed', 'co-ordinated', 'motivated', 'supervised', and 'achieved'.
- **Quote concrete outcomes to support your claims.** For example, 'This reduced the development time from 7 to 3 days' or 'This revolutionized the company's internal structure, and led to a reduction in overheads from £23,000 to £17,000 per year'.
- **Make use of the internet for sample CVs and CV templates** - to help maximize the impact of your CV and to get inspiration for layout and tone.

### **What not to include in your CV**

- **Hand-write or type your CV.** This looks unprofessional and old fashioned.
- **Include information which may be viewed negatively** - failed exams, divorces, failed business ventures, reasons for leaving a job, points on your driving license. Don't lie, but just don't include this kind of information. Don't give the interviewer any reason to discard you at this stage.
- **Include anything that might discriminate against you** - such as date of birth, marital status, race, gender or disability.
- **Include salary information and expectations.** Leave this for negotiations after your interview, when the employers are convinced how much they want to employ you.
- **Make your CV more than two pages long.** You can free up space by leaving out or editing information that is less important. For example, you do not need to include referees - just state they are available on request. Don't include all of the jobs you have had since school, just the relevant ones. Add details about your most recent qualifications, which are more relevant, but summarize the rest.
- **Dilute your important messages.** Don't bother with a list of schools you attended with grades and addresses, don't include a long list of hobbies, or a long work history. Concentrate on demonstrating that the skills they need, what you have achieved by applying the skills you have and what benefits your clients have gained from your work.
- **Use jargon, acronyms, technical terms** - unless essential.

- **Lie** - employers have ways of checking what you put is true, and may sack you if they take you on and find out you've lied to them.
- **Include a photo unless requested.**
- Make your CV visually appealing. Look at how others have done their CV. Ask your professors and colleagues for examples.
- Start your CV with general contact information that includes your name, address, telephone, fax, email and url (if you have a web page about yourself as a professional).
- Include these sections in your CV: contact information; education and experience. Include these sections depending on your strengths and interests: honors and awards (from post-secondary school); teaching and research interests; publications; presentations; professional activities (committee memberships, intern experiences, relevant volunteer work); skills (second language and/or computer proficiencies); and references (you may include these or indicate they are available on request).
- Check your CV carefully for spelling and typographical errors.
- Use formatting such as bullets, italics or bold font only sparingly and use paper that is white, beige or a neutral color that weighs between 20# and 50#.

### **What Not to Do When Writing a CV**

- **Don't** try and do it all by yourself the first time. Seek help from others such as faculty advisors, career specialists or colleagues.
- **Don't** worry too much about length — there are no rules on length. The CV should be professional and should include your important data.

- **Don't** include the following information. These things are not necessary: age; ethnic identity; political affiliation; religious preference; hobbies; marital status; sexual orientation; place of birth; photographs; height; weight and health.
- **Don't** pad your CV by listing excessively detailed information about research or teaching. Instead, provide the titles of research projects and course names along with brief summaries of your work.
- **Don't** include information that is humorous. The CV is not the place for humor or being "cute."

## **Report Writing**

Reports are systematic, well organized documents used to communicate information which has been compiled as a result of research and analysis of data and of issues. Reports can cover a wide range of topics, but usually focus on transmitting information with a clear purpose, to a specific audience.

Therefore a report is a presentation of facts and findings aimed at forming an opinion or recommendation. We can also describe a report as a prepared account of what happened, about a particular event and so is a document explaining an occurrence. Reports are often structured in a way that reflects the information finding process and the writing up of the findings: that is, in a summary of the contents, introduction or background, methods, results, discussion, conclusion and/or recommendations. The inclusion of recommendations is one reason why reports are a common form of writing in every profession and academics, since the informed recommendations are useful for decision making. A report may be a single

report or a series of them depending on what is being reported and the duration of the occurrence.

### **What is a good report?**

- Good reports are documents that are accurate, objective and complete. They should also be well-written, clearly structured and expressed in a way that holds the reader's attention and meets their expectations. The true value of the research may be judged through a report since. Thus the quality and worth of work can be judged by the quality of the written report. Its clarity, organization and content" (Blake & Bly, 1993: 119).

In summary, a good report:

- Must meet the needs of the readers and answer the questions in their minds;
- Must be at the right level for the readers. Some readers have an in-depth knowledge of the subject while others may be decision-makers without specialized, technical knowledge;
- Must have a clear, logical structure-with clear signposting to show where the ideas are leading
- Must give a good first impression and be presented well in an orderly and chronological manner;
- Must not make assumptions about the readers' understanding;
- Must be grammatical and concise having a time reference.

## **Scope and structure**

The scope and style of reports vary depending on three key factors:

- The report's intended audience,
- The report's purpose and
- The type of information to be communicated;

For example, technical reports communicate technical information, so the degree of technicality in the report will depend on the reader's familiarity and understanding of technical concepts. All report are presented in formal and organized format backed with statistical evidence where necessary.

## **Functions of a Report**

Reports are used for:

- Judging performance
- Informing change
- Fact finding
- Pointing Causes of problems e.g., low margins, high rate of staff turnover, accidents in factory etc.
- Suggesting measures to overcome the business problems.
- For improvement of operational or technical assignments, planning procedures, and solving problems.
- Decision Making.

## **Types of Reports**

1. **Academic Report.** These are usually detailed and in most cases targeting academicians. They are of high content and the producer and the reader are at the same level or a little different.
2. **Professional Report.** Professional reports are for informing and persuading people as well as initiating change. They may be detailed depending on the targeted audience and taste of the sponsor. In most cases they have a mixed audience made up of those who may understand the in-depth of the subject content and non technical people like the decision-makers.
3. **Formal Report.** The formal report collects and interprets data and reports information. The formal report is complex and may even be produced in bound book volumes. It is often a written account of a major project. Examples of subject matter include new technologies, the advisability of launching a new project line, results of a study or experiment, analysis of relocation for corporate relocation, an annual report, or a year old review of developments in the field.
4. **Technical and Special Reports.** The technical report is a category, not by type. Many industries and disciplines need specialized reports. Within the insurance industry and in police work, there are needs for specialized accident or incident reports.
5. **Feasibility report.** The feasibility report defines a need or proposed idea, then analyses, compares and recommends a course of action. When your organization is considering a new location, expansion, or purchase of new equipment, for example, it's imperative that you look closely to see which course of action is best and if that course of action is likely to succeed.

## Parts of a report

### 1. Title

The title page should also contain details, including:

- i) Full title of the report;
- ii) Name(s) of the author(s);
- iii) Purpose for which the report is prepared;
- iv) Name of the institution for which the report is prepared;
- v) Month and year of report.

2. **Executive summary:** Executive summary is the summary of the whole report in a logical order. This should highlight the purpose, research methods, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. An executive summary should be written in the past tense and should not be longer than 1 page. Though this section is included in the first part of the report, it is easier to write this part, after completing the rest of the report.

3. **Introduction;** This is one of the most important paragraphs. An effective introduction introduces the topic and purpose of the report or essay and outlines your approach, i.e. the main ideas that will be developed within it. After reading just the introduction, the reader should be able to know (i) the **purpose** of the paper and (ii) the **main ideas** which will be covered within it.

4. **Method/Methodology:** This is the section where you explain the methods used in your research. If it is a scientific research, you can describe the experimental procedures.



5. **Results\Findings:** This section presents the results or findings of your project/research. You can also present data using visual methods such as tables, graphs, etc. However, do not interpret the findings here.
6. **Discussion:** In this section, you can explain what the above results mean. You can also analyze, interpret and evaluate data, note trends, and compare results with theory. Generally, this is referred to as the most important part of the report.
7. **Conclusions:** This is a brief summary of findings. Conclusion should not be confused with Results/Findings section as the conclusion is a simplification of the problem that can reasonably be deduced from the findings.
8. **Recommendations:** In recommendation section, suitable changes, solutions should be provided.
9. **Appendices/ Annexes.** These generally contain detailed information which is not essential in the main chapters of the report but which need to be reproduced. Examples of material suitable for appendices include a copy of any questionnaire or interview outline used in the research, economic information, background information on companies used in case study, list of abbreviations used in the report, etc.

## **Steps to Follow when Writing a Report**

### **1. Plan**

Before putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard!), it is important to plan how you will approach to the assignment of writing a report. Planning includes:

**Define the purpose** - Make sure you have carefully read and analysed the

assignment and have a clear idea of the exact purpose.

**Gather information** - Use a variety of sources in your fact finding, and reference the sources accurately. When gathering information, take into account the following details:

- *Authorship* (who has written this material?)
- *Bias* (might the author be biased in any particular way)
- *Currency* (how up-to-date or relevant is this source?)

Remember to keep track of each source you use, so that you'll be able to correctly reference each of your sources in the final essay.

**During the planning stage try to impose the tentative structure your material will adopt.** However, do not impose a structure too early; gather your ideas, assess them, then organize and evaluate them. Once this is done, you can identify the 3 to 5 main ideas around which to structure the report or essay. The overall structure of a report or essay should look something like this:

- **Introduction** - outlining your approach to the report or essay
- **Body** - 3 to 5 main points; 1 or 2 paragraphs for each main point
- **Summary and/or conclusions** - summarize/conclude your main message
- **List of references** - list all sources used in preparing the report or essay

## 2. Write

Many people unfortunately begin the report writing process at this stage. It becomes much easier to write a good paper after you have clarified the purpose,

gathered the relevant information, assessed and evaluated the information, and planned the structure as explained in the planning stage above.

Writing must begin with a rough draft of each of the main sections first. After this, you can more easily write the introduction (outlining your approach) and the summary/conclusion (summarizing the key ideas of the report or essay).

### **3. Reference your Sources**

**4. Review;** Once your first draft is written, it's time to refine and revise, taking care to use a clear writing style. Finally, proof-read from start to finish; it is often useful to ask someone else to do this, as errors can go unnoticed when you have worked on a piece of writing for some time.

### **5. Write the final draft of the report**

The final draft must be written professionally, the same way as you would speak. Write the way you would speak in a formal professional business setting. Use the register of your profession. Do not use jargon. Avoid complex words which you would not normally use in everyday speech and everyday life. The material should be capable of being understood by the average man in the street. The language and tone should be professional/academic.

Use short sentences. We normally say use KISS: Keep it short and sweet.

Avoid redundant words. These are flowery words. Words that do not add meaning. Eliminate redundant words from sentences, while at the same time retaining the full meaning of the sentence. Do not include words where their omission would

make no difference to the meaning of the sentence.

### **Length and format:**

Maximum length, in terms of number of words, may be specified. There is however no relationship between quality and length of report. Nonetheless, there is a trend towards concise, brief reports. Briefer reports are more likely to reflect sharp and clear thinking (Allen, 1973).

Choice of font and spacing should be double spacing, in Times New Roman 12 font.

### **Using tables and figures**

Tables are very powerful tools for summarizing material. If they are well structured they can communicate a lot of information very parsimoniously. Figures, similarly, are powerful communication tools. Commentary should come before (not after) tables and figures. However, there are occasions where comments may follow rather than precede tables and figures.

### ***When writing a report;***

1. Don't use no double negative or emotional words;
2. Make each pronoun agree with their antecedent;
3. Use connectors;
4. Verbs must to agree with their subjects and case;
5. Punctuate your report professionally;
6. Correct spelling.

### **Format for Report writing**

#### **1. Memos**

A memo, short for memorandum, is a type of routine report an organization prepares for internal communication purposes. It is impersonal and objective in its tone, and its length ranges between a sentence or two to several pages. Most memos begin with background information, including information on the sender, receiver, the date, subject and location in case the memo refers to an event. A memo is the most informal type of report format.

## **2. Letter Report**

Letter reports are usually one-page documents used for external communication purposes. They are in block format and include standard features of letters, such as the sender's address, receiver's name and address, date, salutation, body, acknowledgment and sender's signature. Letter reports normally are typed on a company letterhead.

## **3. Formal Reports**

Formal reports follow a methodical structure and communicate knowledge, results and findings to a range of internal and external readers. Most formal reports contain a title page, cover letter, table of contents, list of tables and illustrations, executive summary, an extensive body and references. The title page lists the name of the report, date of completion and name of author or company. The cover letter summarizes the purpose of the report, its importance and any required follow-up action needed. The table of contents lists the major topics in the report along with their page numbers. The executive summary highlights the report's main points, the report body also may include conclusions and recommendations, and the

references page notes the sources cited in the report.

#### **4. Semi-Formal Reports**

A semi-formal report, also called a titled document, is a shorter, less complex version of a formal report. Semi-formal reports typically have multiple pages including a title page, introduction page, a body and references.

### **Business Plan**

A Business Plan helps you evaluate the **feasibility(Possibility)** of a new business idea in an objective, critical, and without being emotional. A plan can be meant for external purposes and so must be very formal. If you intend to present the plan to outsiders as a financing proposal then the presentation quality must be formal and professional and must include a thorough financial analysis.

An internal plan may be less formal.

When one is planning to write a business plan, one must ask the following questions:

- Marketing - Is there a market? How much can I sell?
- Management - Does the management team have the skill required?
- Financial - Can the business make a profit?

A plan provides an **operating strategy** to assist you in running the business and improves your probability of success. Your strategy must:

- Identify opportunities and avoid mistakes;
- Develop production, administrative, and marketing plans
- Create budgets and projections to show financial outcomes

A plan **communicates your idea** to others, serves as a “selling tool,” and provides the basis for your financing proposal.

- Determine the amount and type of financing needed;
- Forecast profitability and investor return on investment;
- Forecast cash flow, show liquidity and ability to repay debt;

### **Who will use the plan?**

- The plan can be used to solicit (raise) for funds,
- The plan acts as a monitoring and Evaluation tool.

### **Basic Business Plan Guidelines**

Writing a Business Plan takes a lot of time especially if it is for a new business that requires a lot of research.

A typical plan will have **three sections**.

- **Section One** should be thorough and is a written section describing Management and Marketing aspects of the business. Although thorough, this section must also be concise and to-the-point. Use headlines, graphs and "bullets" to improve readability. Length of this section is usually 10 - 20 pages.

- **Section Two** includes financial projections and describes in numbers the outcome of your business strategies and plans. Your financial projections should be based on facts and research, not "wild guesses." Be prepared to justify your numbers.

- **Section Three** contains supporting information to reinforce the first two sections. This section's contents will vary with your type of business.

Owners should be very involved in the planning process. Hiring someone to do it or delegating it to someone who is not a key member of the company will result in an inferior plan.

A business with no plan (or a poor plan) is a leading cause of business failure. A good business plan improves your chances of success.

### **Ways to Ruin Your Business Plan**

These errors in business plan preparation and presentation will undermine the credibility of the plan and hurt your chances to receive funding:

- **Submitting a “rough copy,”** (with coffee stains and typos) tells the reader that management doesn’t take the planning process seriously.
- **Outdated historical financial information** or unrealistic industry comparisons will leave doubts about the entrepreneur’s planning abilities.
- **Unsubstantiated assumptions** can hurt a business plan; the business owner must be prepared to explain the “why” of every point in the plan.
- **Too much “blue sky”** - a failure to consider prospective challenges will lead the reader to conclude that the idea is not realistic.
- **A lack of understanding of financial information.** Even if someone else prepares the projections, the owner must be able to explain them.
- **Lack of specific, detailed strategies.** A plan that includes only general statements of strategy (“We will provide world class service *and* the lowest possible price.”) without important details will be dismissed as fluff.
- **No indication that the owner has anything at stake.** The lender expects the entrepreneur to have some equity capital invested in the business.
- **Unwillingness to personally guarantee any loans.** If the business owner isn’t willing to stand behind his or her company, then why should the bank?
- **Starting the plan with unrealistic loan amounts or terms.** Do your homework and propose a realistic structure.
- **Too much focus on collateral.** Even for a cash-secured loan, the banker is looking toward projected profits for repayment of the loan. Cash flow should be emphasized as the source of repayment.

## **Business Plan Outline**





**Cover Sheet:** Business Name, Address, Phone Number, Principals

**Statement of Purpose (Vision and Mission statement) ,**

**Executive Summary or Statement of Purpose**

**Table of Contents**

**Section One: The Business**

- A. Description of Business
- B. Products/Services
- C. Market Analysis
- D. Marketing Plan
- E. Location
- F. Competition
- G. Management and Operations
- H. Personnel
- I. Application and Effect of Loan or Investment

**Explanation for Description of the Business**

Part A provides an overview of key information which is developed in greater detail in the following pages.

**Aim for clarity and simplicity** in this part. Too much detail gets in the way of the main ideas. **Test** Can you explain your basic business idea?

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) What general type of business is this?
- 2) What is the status of the business? Start-up, expansion or take-over?
- 3) What is the business form? Sole Proprietorship, Partnership, Corporation or Limited Liability Company?
- 4) What are your products?

5) Who are (will be) your customers?

**Additional Questions for Start-Ups:**

- 1) Why will **you** be successful in this business?
- 2) What is your experience with this type of business?
- 3) What will be special or unique about this business?
- 4) Why will your business be successful?

**Additional Questions for Purchase of Existing Business:**

- 1) When and by whom was the business founded?
- 2) Why is the owner selling?
- 3) How was the purchase price determined?
- 4) What are the current financial conditions and trends?
- 5) How will your management make the business more profitable?

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**B. Products/Services**

In this section, describe your product offering. This will include details of product features and an overview of unique technology or processes. But don't stop there and don't focus too much on technology. You must also describe the product benefits and why customers will want to buy.

For most businesses, the **products/services are not totally unique**. If yours are, take advantage of this while you can and plan for the competitive battles that will come.

If your products/services are not unique, you must find a way to **position** your products/services in the mind of your customer and to **differentiate** them from the competition. Positioning is the process of establishing your image with

prospects or customers. (Examples include: highest quality, lowest price, wider selection, Best customer service, faster delivery, etc.)

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) What products/services are you (will you be) selling?
- 2) What are the features and benefits of what you sell?
- 3) What Position do you have (or want to have) in the market?
- 4) How do your products/services differ from the competition?
- 5) What makes your products unique and desirable?
- 6) Why do (will) customers buy from you?

**C. Market Analysis**

For start-ups or existing businesses, market analysis is important as the basis for the marketing plan and to help justify the sales forecast. Existing businesses will rely heavily on past performance as an indicator of the future. Start-ups have a greater challenge since they will rely more on market research using libraries, trade associations, government statistics, surveys, competitor observation, etc. In all cases, make sure your market analysis is relevant to establishing the viability of the business and the reasonableness of the sales forecast.

**Questions for Existing Businesses:**

- 1) Who are your current customers? (List largest customers or categories.)
- 2) What do they buy from you?
- 3) Why do they buy from you? (Quality, Price, Reputation, etc.?)

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) Who are the purchasers of your products or type of products? (Geographic, Demographic and Psychographic characteristics)
- 2) What is the size of the market? Is it growing?

- 3) What is (will be) your share? How will your share change over time?
- 4) What is the industry outlook?
- 5) Are there segments of users who are under-served by competition?
- 6) Do any of these under-served segments present opportunities?

#### **D. Marketing Plan**

In this section, you include the highlights or your detailed marketing plan. The basic components of a Marketing Plan are:

- What are you selling? (What benefits do you provide and what position or image do you have?)
- Who wants the things you sell? (Identify Target Markets)
- How will you reach your Target Markets and motivate them to buy?  
(Develop Product, Price, and Promotional Strategies)

#### **Product Strategies**

- 1) How will products be packaged?
- 2) How broad will your product line be?
- 3) What new products will you introduce?
- 4) What Position or Image will you try to develop or reinforce?

#### **Pricing Strategies**

- 1) What will be your pricing strategies? (For example: Premium, Every Day Low Price, Frequent Sale Prices, Meet Competitor Price, etc.)
- 2) How will you compare with competition and how will they respond?
- 3) Why will customers pay your price?
- 4) What will be your credit policies?
- 5) Is there anything about your business which insulates you from price competition?

6) Can you add value and compete on issues other than price?

### **Promotional Strategies**

- 1) Who are your Target Markets?
- 2) How will you reach your Target Markets? (What Media will you use?)
- 3) How will you motivate them to buy? (What Message will you stress?)
- 4) What is the cost and timetable for implementation of the marketing plan?

### **E. Location**

Locations with greater customer traffic usually cost more to buy or rent, but they require less spending for advertising to attract customers. This is especially true of retail businesses where traffic count and accessibility are critical.

#### **Basic Questions:**

- 1) What is the business address?
- 2) Is it owned or leased? If leased, what are the terms?
- 3) Are renovations or modifications needed, and what are the costs?
- 4) Describe the property and the surrounding area.
- 5) Why is this a good location for your business?

For Mail Order, Telemarketing, Manufacturing, Consulting, or other companies where the customer does not purchase while physically at the business address, less location detail is needed. Modify the location section to fit your situation. In some cases, a good location may be one close to suppliers, transportation hubs or a complementary business that will also attract your Target Market.

### **F. Competition**

"Who is your competition?" is one of the first questions a banker or investor will ask. Business by nature is competitive, and few businesses are completely new. If

there are no competitors, be careful; there may be no market for your products.

Expand your concept of competition.

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) Who are (will be) your largest competitors? List them.
- 2) How will your operation be better (and worse) than your competitors?
- 3) How are competitors doing? What are their sales and profits?
- 4) (If Start-Up) How will competition respond to your market entry?

**G. Management and Operations**

Because management problems are the leading cause of business failures, it is important to discuss management qualifications and structure. Resumes of Principals should be included in supporting data. If your business will have few employees and rely heavily on outside professionals, list these key people and their qualifications. If you are seeking financing, include personal financial statements for all principals in supporting data section.

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) What is the business management experience of the management team?
- 2) What are the functional areas of the business?
- 3) Who will be responsible for each functional area?
- 4) Who reports to whom?
- 5) What will salaries be?
- 6) What management resources outside the company are available?
- 7) How will your products/services be produced? (Describe manufacturing processes, proprietary technology and key supplier relationships.)

**H. Personnel**

The success of many companies depends on their ability to recruit, train and retain quality employees. The amount of emphasis in your plan will depend on the number and type of employees required.

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) What are the personnel needs now? In the future?
- 2) What skills must they have? What training will you provide?
- 3) Are the people you need available?
- 4) What is their compensation? What fringe benefits will be provided?

**I. Application and Effect of Loan or Investment**

This section is important whether you are seeking a loan, outside investment (equity) or investing your own money.

**Basic Questions:**

- 1) What is the total investment required?
- 2) How will the loan or investment be used?
- 3) How will the loan or investment make the business more profitable?
- 4) When will the loan be repaid?
- 5) If you are seeking equity (selling part of the business to an investor):
- 6) What percent of the company are you willing to give up?
- 7) What rate of return is possible for the investor? (Note: If your business plan will be presented to private investors, seek legal counsel to be sure you are in compliance with securities laws.)

**Section Two: Financial Data**

**A. Projected Financial Statements**

- Income Statements
- Cash Flow Statements

- Balance Sheets
- Assumptions to Projected Financial Statements

B. Break Even Analysis

C. Sources and Uses of Funds

### **Projected Financial Statements**

The basic purposes of financial projections are:

- Establish the profit potential of the business, given reasonable assumptions
- Determine how much capital the company needs and how it will be used
- Demonstrate the business can generate the cash to operate and re-pay loans

It is usually helpful, but not necessary, to complete at least a rough draft of Section One (the written section) before attempting the financial section. In the written section, you will develop and describe your strategies for the business.

In the financial section, you will estimate the financial impact of those strategies by developing projected Income Statements, Balance Sheets, and Cash Flow Statements. It is usually recommended that these projected statements be on a monthly basis for at least the first twelve months or until the business is profitable and stable. Activity displayed beyond the monthly detail may be in summary form (such as quarterly or annually.) The forecast period for most business plans is two to four years.

Before you start developing projected financial statements, gather the suggested information on the following pages. The personal computer is an excellent tool for financial projections; and those with a good background in accounting and personal computer spreadsheets may want to create their own financial forecast model.

(There are also some specialized software programs which have basic templates to help with your financial forecast.)



The quality of your projection depends on the accuracy of the assumptions.

Existing businesses will rely heavily on past financial results as the basis for their forecasts. Start-ups have greater challenges. They must do extensive research to prove the reasonableness of their numbers. Examples of sources include:

Industry data from public sources and trade associations, personal interviews with potential customers and people in the business, competitive observation and analysis, etc.

### **Steps in Financial Projections**

*For items 1 and 2, use the following "Fixed Asset/Start-up Expense List."*

- 1) Estimate fixed asset requirements for the first year.** Include Land, Buildings, Leasehold Improvements, Equipment, and Vehicles.
- 2) Estimate any start-up or one-time expenses.** Include any expenses needed to begin operation such as legal fees, licenses, and initial marketing costs.

*For item 3, use the following "Unit Selling Price and Cost Analysis" sheet.*

- 3) Define each "unit" of your product or service and estimate the selling price and direct cost per unit.** In the appropriate places on the form, estimate Cost of Sales and calculate Gross Profit as a percentage of the selling price.

*For items 4 through 6, use the following "Projected Income Statement".*

- 4) Estimate sales by month for at least one year.** (Unit sales price times the number of units.) Consider how start-up, marketing, and seasonal factors affect sales.
- 5) Estimate monthly Cost of Sales and Gross Profit based on the percentages of sales calculated in #3 above.** Use a weighted average if multiple product lines.
- 6) Estimate and itemize fixed expenses by month for at least one year.**

Include things like rent, insurance, utilities, salaries, marketing, legal/accounting,

etc. Determine all categories which apply to your business, but don't include expenses here that are in "cost of goods (services) sold."

*Research items 7 through 10, and provide a short narrative.*

**7) Describe the amount of inventory (if any) required to support the sales forecast.**

Express in number of days sales or turnover if possible.

**8) Describe your credit, sales, and collections policies.** If you will make sales on credit, estimate the number of days after the sale before the average customer pays.

**9) Describe how fast you must pay your vendors** for any items you will purchase.

**10) Also: Estimate obligations for Income Taxes.**

**- Businesses already in operation will need the latest Balance Sheet.**

**Section Three: Supporting Documents** Historical financial statements, tax returns, resumes, reference letters, personal financial statements, facilities diagrams, letters of intent, purchase orders, contracts, etc.

### **Minute Writing**

**Minutes** are also referred to as **protocols or meeting notes**. Taking Minutes forms an essential part of most meetings and are the immediate written record of a meeting. Minutes characteristically describe the events of the meeting, includes a list of attendees, a statement of the matters considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions made about the matters discussed. Minutes are a summary of what has been discussed during a meeting. They are authentic documents which must be taken seriously especially because they can be used in a court of law.

Meeting minutes keep an official account of what was done or talked about at formal meetings, including any decisions made or actions taken.

They are taken during a formal meeting of the board of directors or shareholders of a corporation, such as initial and annual meetings. Taking minutes is a skilled job because the minute taker has to follow what can be confusing and inarticulate debates and summarise accurately what was said. Meeting minutes are effective contributor to successful meetings and must be appropriately written and distributed in time. The main problem with reports is that they take a long time to be written down and after the meetings they must be sent quickly to let everyone know their next projects or actions.

### **Functions of Minutes**

1. To protect the organization and the staff.
2. To record Action Points, i.e., what actions have been decided upon, who is responsible and what the milestones and deadlines are.
3. They record summaries of the discussions held at the meeting.
4. Act as a grounding and authentic basis for decisions made.
5. Are legal documents and can be used in courts and in Banks.
6. It is helpful to record the meeting so the recording can be referenced for details and to clarify information later.

### **Stages in Minute Taking**

1. Preparation/Planning

The taking of minutes begins with preparation to take the minutes in an upcoming meeting. Preparation for the meeting includes:

- gathering the agenda,
- minutes from the last meeting,
- any documents that will be discussed at the meeting and
- Writing material or tape recorder.

### **During the meeting**

This is the time when the actual recording of minutes takes place. Minutes can be recorded on paper or on a laptop.

### **After the meeting**

After the meeting the minutes should be checked with the chairperson to confirm accuracy and then circulated to all attendees and anyone else affected by any decisions taken at the meeting. One single email can be sent to everyone present at the meeting, plus anyone else who needs to be informed.

### **What to include in Minutes**

- Title: Name of the group meeting, Date, Time, Venue
- The names of the participants
- Agenda items
- Calendar or due dates
- Actions or tasks
- The main points

- Decisions made by the participants
- Record what is the most important points
- Future decisions

## **STEPS IN MINUTE TAKING**

### **1. Start with the goal of the meeting**

At the top of the meeting minutes, put the agenda below the title. It's easier to take minutes when you know what exactly you're expected to accomplish in the meeting. If you're not sure about the agenda of the meeting, ask.

### **2. List who is present at the meeting**

List everyone who attends. Get names of people you don't know up front, since you'll need their names as you record the meeting. You should pass around an attendance sheet. Don't forget to include anyone who's attending the meeting remotely (via video or teleconference). And list that not in attendance.

### **3. Record the start time**

By capturing the time start and date in the meeting minutes, you can begin to see if there is a systemic issue with timely starts and bring this concern to the participants after enough data is captured.

### **4. Capture key items**

Taking meeting minutes is not like the 1960s movies where the secretary comes into the boardroom and sits quietly not participating in the meeting. You're

expected to contribute, so you can't spend all your time capturing what's been said.

The key items you want to get down are:

- What is discussed
- What is decided
- What is accomplished
- What are the next steps/actions

For important discussions/debates, provide all perspectives (using an anchor chart or some other shorthand). If a decision was made, state it before describing how it came to pass. In today's world of inattention, get to the point first then tell the story. The meeting minutes should not be a full transcript; they should just enough to trigger a recall of the meeting's most significant actions.

It's important to record not just what was decided, however, but how and by whom. Was the decision the result of a team vote, a consensus, or a "decider" who made the decision for the group? Oftentimes when an organization struggles, it looks for scapegoats to blame for certain outcomes. An accurate recording of the minutes helps ensure that individuals are not blamed for group decisions.

## **5. Describe the next steps/actions in detail**

- **What actions need to be taken?** The actions must be specific so that when you or others look back at these minutes they know exactly what is expected.
- **Who is responsible for each action?** There should always be a directly responsible individual (DRI), even if a team is assigned to work on the action. A DRI control the actions, drives it forward, and ensures it doesn't fall

between the cracks. That said, list all the team members participating in this action, not just the DRI.

- **Describe** what will the measurable outcome(s) will be.
- **What resources are needed?** Too often actions are initiated and decisions are made without the necessary resources to complete the actions. This is a great way to slow down the organization. The way to speed it up is to determine the resources required and provide advance approval for the them if possible.
- **When will the action commence and end?** Often leaders become annoyed because they remember making a decision and then forget when they should be seeing progress. By both putting a start date and end date, it creates clarity for all meeting participants about what is expected.
- **When will the DRI report back?** Indicate whether the DRI will be reporting back at a future meeting or to a specific party.
- **How should the DRI report Back?** Some organizations will want formal presentations, others a small blurb in a weekly report. In order to satisfy all participants find out the form the reporting back to the team should take.

## **6. Don't belittle or embarrass anyone**

Keep the minutes clean, upbeat, and professional.

## **7. Edit & proof the meeting minutes**

“Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of that which matters least,” said Aristotle. Typos and grammatical errors sometimes distract readers from what matters most. Check for errors, and also make sure the minutes are

clear, crisp, and concise. Cut out anything that isn't significant. If possible, have someone proof your minutes before you distribute them.

### **8. Disseminate the Minutes**

Timeliness is next to Godliness (or at least highly respected in organizational life). You should aim to get the minutes out within an hour of the meeting and at latest by the end of the day. By providing the feedback quickly, you will elevate the importance and urgency.

### **9. Attach relevant documents**

Attach any handouts or documents electronically, so that all participants and non-participants have easy access to them.

### **10. Ask a question when distributing the minutes**

When distributing meeting minutes, ask a question via e-mail to the participants, so that they will have to look at the minutes to respond. If you don't ask a question, they will likely allow the email to be consumed by a flood of other equally important emails. You might ask if you got a particular point correct, or if you got the assignment correct for Mrs. Murphy

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